

YOUNG MOTHERS, SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND CITIZENSHIP

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ABSTRACT

With the development of the Social Inclusion Unit, the 1997 New Labour government committed themselves to a process of reintegrating and increasing the participation of marginalized groups within mainstream society. A major development produced by the unit has been their 'Report on Teenage Pregnancy' (1999a), reflecting a political and social agenda aimed at decreasing teenage conceptions and pregnancies. One way that the government has attempted to achieve these goals, have been through disseminating social and political discourse outlining the social problems associated with teenage pregnancy and young motherhood. This has resulted in a kind of 'moral panic' surrounding teenage pregnancy and young motherhood, which is reflected in social inclusion strategies that are aimed at decreasing teenage pregnancy, and encouraging young mothers to increase their participation in the labour market. This study will also highlight the connection between current social exclusion strategies and programmes, and New Labour's view of citizenship that suggests that young mothers do not display the characteristics associated with active citizenship. This is because, the liberal view of citizenship that is inherent in New Labour's social inclusion strategies, excludes the both the personal and political duties associated with young mothers' mothering. In turn, this not only prevents young mothers, but all women who engaging in full-time familial duties, from accessing formal and substantive citizenship rights (Young, 1990a, Phillips, 1993). Yet, because young motherhood is viewed as a social problem, young mothers are often in the position of carrying out their mothering duties under the gaze of the state. This demonstrates a contradiction within New Labour's notion of the active citizen in that for some young mothers, even though the raising of their children is viewed as being in need of social and political attention, the duties and activities associated with their mothering fails to be recognized as demonstrating their participation in society as active citizens. Based on 15 months of participant observation, and in-depth interviews with twenty young mothers from the Greater Pilton community in Edinburgh, Scotland, this study will argue that current social inclusion strategies hold little relevance in the context of the lives of working-class young mothers. This study will therefore argue that current sexual health, employment and education initiatives in the UK, in combination with the State's view of what it means to be an 'active' citizen, may result in exacerbating, rather than alleviating young mothers' experiences of social exclusion.

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

Background to my Research

This thesis marks the coming together of my professional, academic, and personal life during which time I have worked with and studied the lives of young mothers, and have become a mother myself. Originally, my interest in this research emerged out of my fifteen years of professional experience of working with young women and young mothers, and my academic work in both Women's Studies and Social Work. My introduction to social work was through my employment with young Aboriginal women, many of whom became pregnant, living in residential and group home care in Winnipeg Manitoba. One of the things I remember most about my earliest experiences of working in this field of social work were the comments made by my colleagues that suggested that these young women were incapable of 'mothering' and the need for early social work intervention that would ensure the protection of babies from their mothers. Clearly, there were young women who were not in a position to care for their child at this particular moment in time; however, I do remember feeling frustrated at the tendency for mainstream statutory social services to be framed within a child protection model of social work intervention that often lacked a focus on socio-emotional and health based issues and services aimed at supporting young mothers in the care of their children.

Whereas my social work experiences in Canada planted the seeds of interest in considering improved services for pregnant teenagers and young mothers, it is my experience of working with young women in Greater Pilton, a socially and

economically deprived area in Edinburgh, Scotland, that has had the greatest influence on my decision to do PhD research on the lives and experiences of young mothers. Greater Pilton is an area in Edinburgh that comprises of smaller communities including, Pilton, Muirhouse, Granton, Royston and Wardieburn. In 1994 Greater Pilton became a designated regeneration due to the inhabitants experiencing multiple deprivation, including some of the highest rates of unemployment in Edinburgh (Lothian Anti Poverty Alliance). As such, there are a number of both statutory and voluntary organisations based in Greater Pilton, including the Pilton Youth and Children's Project (PYCP) where I worked as the young women's development worker between the years of 1997-2001. Whilst at PYCP, I developed health and sexual health programmes in both the community and the local schools, and engaged in partnership work with both statutory social work services and community-based projects. One of these projects was Stepping Stones. Stepping Stones is voluntary organisation based in Granton, one of the communities based in the Greater Pilton vicinity. Stepping Stones receives core funding from a variety of sources: Social Work, Community Education revenue grant, and Sure Start Scotland¹. Parents who attend the project are referred to the project by health visitors, the social work department, community groups, community midwives, and self or peer referral. The age at which young mothers are referred to the project range from 15 – 25 years old. Once a mother turns 25 the project supports her in making a transition from the project to employment, training and education or other external support as the project is only funded to provide services to young mothers under the age of 26. Services that the project offers include: individual and group support to mothers; educational

¹ This initiative aims to address the specific needs of families with children aged 0-3 years who live in designated socially deprived areas. Its main aim is to promote social inclusion through providing a

opportunities such as computing and communications; activity based groups such as cooking and arts based courses; crèche facilitates for babies and small children; reports from crèche workers on the child's needs, progress, or any other relevant issues and a summer programme that includes a week long holiday for families.

Through both my work in the community and my relationship with Stepping Stones, I noticed that regardless of the amount of sexual health education and support and other related programmes available to the young women I worked with, there were still a high number of teenage pregnancies. Moreover, coming from a community development background resulted in my constant questioning about the effectiveness of services aimed at pregnant teenagers and young mothers which impacted on the way I developed my own community based practice. At first this lead me to question my own practice - what could I being doing differently to prevent teenage pregnancy and young motherhood? What was I doing wrong? However, through getting to know the young mothers on the Stepping Stones management committee, I found my questions shifting from ones which had primarily focused on ways in which to decrease teenage pregnancy, to questions that focused more on the social, economic and cultural factors surrounding young motherhood.

My professional experiences at PYCP and Stepping Stones have also played a large role the development of my interest in 'social exclusion' and 'active citizenship' under the current New Labour government. In both organisations, I often found myself reading what are now called Social Inclusion Partnership grant applications, requesting voluntary sector based human service professionals to develop short-term

positive start in the lives of very young children.

‘social inclusion’ projects in Greater Pilton. At the same time, I was also involved in providing informal citizenship education to young people at two local high schools that included encouraging young people to consider barriers to experiencing substantive citizenship. This developed into my need to question whether or not the social exclusion and active citizenship rhetoric used by the New Labour government and the Scottish Executive has impacted on social policy, social work and other human services, and whether or not this has been extended to young, working-class mothers. I have since had time to critically reflect on my involvement in teaching citizenship education to young people in Greater Pilton and consider what it truly means for marginalised groups of people, young mothers in particular, to experience substantive citizenship through social exclusion policies and programmes.

This research also marks an important chapter of my emotional and intellectual journey and relationship with feminism². My development as a feminist, whether it is as an activist, social worker, researcher or mother, has shifted and changed since the time of my introduction to feminism sixteen years ago. Being both Canadian and Jewish, feminist perspectives that highlighted the issues associated with sexism, racism, anti-Semitism and homophobia became a natural part of my way of thinking and of my social work practice. However, upon moving to Scotland and working in the Greater Pilton community, I soon realised that my understanding of feminism lacked an immediate consideration and analysis of the marginalising experiences associated with social class. Having worked with young women who were struggling with the numerous issues associated with growing up in a socially deprived

² A broader discussion of my journey as a feminist has also been written in Saara Greene (2003) *From Practice to Theory* in Cree, V.E. (Ed.) *Becoming a Social Worker*, Routledge, London.

community, and alongside self-identified working-class, Scottish feminists, I was often challenged on my lack of class analysis. I also engaged in numerous debates about 'race', class and feminism with friends and colleagues who I will be forever grateful to for their time and patience. However, it is perhaps the last four years of my life as a feminist researcher that has provided me with the greatest education and understanding of the realities facing poor and working-class women. In turn, this has enabled me to attain a particular, postmodern feminist perspective of the relationship between class and gender that I may never have achieved. For that, I will be forever thankful to the young mothers that let me into their lives and who shared with me the struggles associated with being a poor or working-class young woman and young mother.

Finally, it is important to state that having been pregnant and giving birth to my own child whilst in the midst of engaging in my field work enabled me to juxtapose my own experiences as a pregnant white, middle-class and educated woman with those of the young mothers I interviewed for this study. Furthermore, developing my own identity as a mother whilst observing and developing relationships with the young mothers that participated in this research, also enabled me to reflect on and continue questioning that which I thought I knew through my professional and academic experiences. I discovered that the young women's experiences of becoming pregnant, having a baby and becoming a mother inevitably mirrored, and at times contrasted with my own lived experiences of pregnancy, childbirth and mothering. I believe that this has provided an added dimension to my study that made the research process all the more emotional whilst at other times, providing me with added insight into my

analysis. Yet, through having both interviewed working-class young mothers who nevertheless demonstrated diverse experiences, and through having a child of my own, there is one thing that I now know with the utmost certainty; that is, that 'Motherhood' is a continually contested identity category whose social positioning constantly shifts and changes, and one that can be altered by a multitude of social and political factors. Mothers are always under somebody's gaze, no matter who or where they are.

This understanding of how motherhood is experienced, particularly for mothers who are monitored by social work and other related services, has evolved throughout the process of engaging in my research. In the very early days of my PhD my limited knowledge about social exclusion and active citizenship suggested to me that the documents and strategies put forward by the New Labour government failed to include the voices of young mothers in the development social exclusion policies and programmes. At the same time, I also began questioning what the government perceived as 'active citizenship' and whether or not the activities associated with or emerging as a result of being a young mother is included in this view. As such, throughout the entire PhD process, I have attempted to critically examine social exclusion strategies and programmes and their relevance and appropriateness in connection with the experiences of the young mothers I interviewed.

The Research Process

The beginning stages of my research included engaging in course work on research methodology and social work and political theory, all of which provided a strong methodological and theoretical basis from which to approach this study. Key research questions were also addressed in the early phase, including the ages of informants,

number of informants, and research methods. Meetings were also conducted with social workers, community midwives, health visitors and community education workers. I also arranged access with Stepping Stones and with the West Pilton Children's Centre (WPCC). The WPCC is a statutory social work agency that provides childcare and support for parents experiencing personal difficulties. The majority of the children attending the WPCC have been referred to the centre by a social worker and as such, both the parents and their children, are under the supervision of the social work staff employed at the agency. Once access was arranged, I planned to begin the interviewing process halfway through my second year.

The fieldwork component of my study started in the very latter stages of the first year and continued over a period of 13 months. The first seven months were focused on spending time at Stepping Stones as a participant observer, which continued throughout the interview stage of my research. As will be discussed in later chapters, I chose to engage in participant observation in order to clarify and develop an interview schedule whilst developing relationships with the young mothers at Stepping Stones and gaining a better sense of the 'culture' of young motherhood within the Greater Pilton community. Six months after attending Stepping Stones as a participant observer I began a five month process of interviewing young mothers attending both Stepping Stones and the WPCC.

During the second year, I carried out interviews with 15 young mothers who attended Stepping Stones and five interviews with young mothers whose children attended the

crèche at the WPCC. Although the majority of my interviews were therefore with young mothers who attended Stepping Stones, I felt it would be useful to interview young mothers who were involved with a statutory social work agency at the time of the interview. The purpose of this was simply to make the interview sample as varied as possible.

The last stages of my fieldwork included interviewing social workers, community educators, midwives and health visitors working in the Greater Pilton Community. Although I did not use these interviews as data for my PhD research, they helped me to establish a sense of the importance of developing increased and more effective services in this community that are not only aimed at preventing teenage pregnancy, but that also address the needs of young women throughout their pregnancy and transition into motherhood. Moreover, these interviews also gave me insight into how other practitioners viewed pregnant teenagers and young mothers in the Greater Pilton community.

Research Aims

The purpose of this research has been to examine the connections between young motherhood, social exclusion and citizenship and has therefore set out to accomplish a number of aims. These include:

- To provide an understanding of the different factors resulting in teenage pregnancy and young motherhood for working-class or poor women living in Greater Pilton;
- To provide an understanding of the culture, experiences, and views of young mothers living in Greater Pilton;
- To understand the ways and the areas through which young mothers living in Greater Pilton experience social exclusion;

- To consider the relevance of New Labour's social inclusion strategies and programmes since 1997 to the experiences of young mothers living in Greater Pilton;
- To examine the ways in which young mothers participate in their communities;
- To juxtapose young mothers' views, experiences and barriers to community based participation with New Labour's view of citizenship and the rhetoric surrounding active citizenship;
- To develop a community development practice framework from which social workers can address issues related to social exclusion and citizenship;
- To contribute to the development of postmodern feminist social work practice, theory and research.

Structure of the Thesis

The structure of this thesis is divided into nine chapters. Chapter 2 provides the background to this study and will discuss previous research and commentary on teenage pregnancy and young motherhood, social exclusion, and citizenship. In addition, this chapter will discuss the importance of challenging the political and social rhetoric about teenage pregnancy and young motherhood by providing a space from which young women can share their personal experiences. Chapter 3 will discuss the theoretical framework in which I developed and designed my research and analysed my data, my methods of analysis and a reflective commentary about the process of engaging in this research. Chapter 4 provides a detailed description of the twenty young mothers who participated in this research and hence a point of reference that can be accessed throughout the reading of this thesis. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 will discuss the findings from this research. Chapter 5 draws on findings about the context in which the young women in this study became pregnant and their views and experiences about their own pregnancies and young motherhood. Chapter 6 explores the young mothers' experiences of social exclusion in the areas of education,

employment, and social services within the context of the social exclusion strategies developed between 1997 and 2001. Chapter 7 situates the young mothers' experiences of mothering and other forms of community based participation within the current government's view of active citizenship. This chapter will also illustrate the ways in which young mothers are indeed 'active' citizens, whilst demonstrating how both liberal and feminist notions of citizenship fail to account for the social, political, public and private spaces where young mothers do their mothering. The findings on young motherhood, social exclusion and citizenship are brought together in Chapter 8 through providing both theoretical implications and practical recommendations for social worker practice. This chapter will highlight the usefulness of postmodern theory in the ongoing development of community based social work practice and, more specifically, the contribution that postmodern feminist theory can make to social work based theories on the body; will demonstrate the usefulness of engaging in social work based community work practices; and will draw links between the findings from this research and social work's role in decreasing social exclusion and broadening the citizenship status of young mothers. Finally, Chapter 9 provides the conclusion of this thesis, taking forward the ideas and recommendations emerging from this research. It is my hope that the findings from this research will both provide useful political and social theories about teenage pregnancy and young motherhood and contribute to the development of social work based social inclusion practices and programmes.

Chapter Two

Young Mothers, Social Exclusion and Citizenship

Introduction

The social positioning of mothering has been both 'revered and denigrated over the centuries' (Greaves et al, 2002:3), and this has meant that, at times, motherhood has also been viewed as requiring some form of regulation and surveillance (Smart, 1992). This is reflected in the social welfare in the UK through the development of social policies and programmes that have been aimed at the regulation of motherhood and the controlling mothers (Spensky, 1992, Jamieson, 1997). The last fifteen years, however, have demonstrated that the social and political attitudes presented by the UK government have identified teenage pregnancy and young motherhood in particular as both a cause and example of social exclusion and this is reflected in the current New Labour government's social exclusion initiatives (SEU, 1999a). At the same time, social inclusion and citizenship has been identified as signifying participation in paid employment in a move toward shifting people off benefit and into the labour market (Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), www.gov.uk). I will therefore argue that New Labour policies and initiatives that focus primarily on labour market participation will ultimately exacerbate rather than alleviate young mothers' experiences of social exclusion.

This chapter will set out firstly, to illustrate the context of teenage motherhood in Scotland, England and Wales before turning to a critical examination of the presentation of teenage motherhood as a social problem historically and up to the present day. I will then explore the research that has been carried out on teenage

mothers to date, which has both contributed to and challenged the notion of teenage pregnancy and young motherhood as a social problem. Finally, I will explore the ways in which New Labour's social exclusion and citizenship discourses have been used to highlight young mothers as a particular target of government concern and intervention.

The Context

Recent statistics demonstrate that young women in Scotland between 13 –19 years became pregnant in 2000³ with approximately 4 in 1000 young women between 13 – 15 and 42 in 1000 of 15 – 19 year olds delivering a baby. Statistics from the same year and age cohort in England are slightly higher with 8.3 out of 1000 of 13-15 year olds and 43.6 out of 1000 15 – 17 year old young women becoming pregnant in the same year, and with 24.5 out of 1000 conceptions of young women between 15 - 19 resulting in a birth (Office for National Statistics, 2002). Although Scottish statistics indicate that teenage pregnancy rates in Scotland have changed very little over the past 15 years⁴, the New Labour government since 1997 in Scotland, England and Wales have highlighted teenage pregnancy as a nationally growing concern (SEU, 1999a, Scottish Office, 1999a). This has resulted in the development of a number of national and regional programmes aimed at decreasing teenage pregnancy and encouraging young mothers to increase their participation in education and training programmes (SEU, 1999a, SEU, 1999b, Scottish Office, 1999a, DWP). However,

³ ISD Scotland Website, Scottish Health Service provisional figures.

⁴ This information is provided in 'Teenage Pregnancy in Scotland: a fifteen-year review, 1983-1997, Health briefing no 98/04, issued by the Scottish Health Service, July 1998. See also Scottish Health Statistics 1997.

the messages about pregnant teenagers and young mothers that are reflected in these government reports, strategies and programmes, have contributed to the social problem discourse on young motherhood.

While mothers have long been subjected to a critical gaze, the focus of the critique changes throughout history. At the present time, young mothers appear to be particularly stigmatised. This is reflected in suggestions that their 'decisions' to become mothers have been influenced on their desire to access income support and social housing. However, the age of a mother has not always been the focus of government control and surveillance. As Jamieson (1997) points out, racist and classist attitudes reflected in late 19th Century public policies regarding the 'stock of the nation' in Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand in late 19th Century, demonstrated that whilst mothers who were perceived to be of 'good stock' were encouraged to have children, 'preoccupation with the 'enemy within' resulted in targeted birth control and surveillance' (p.28). In addition, the regulation of women's sexuality in regard to their potential roles as mothers documented in historical, sociological, and social work based research, argue that the family has and continues to be being a key institution in the socialising of children for adult roles, and for maintaining the ideology of the 'good mother' (Zimmerman, 1988, Jamieson, 1997). Accordingly, Jamieson (1997) has highlighted the State's increased role in engaging in 'the business of managing motherhood' (p.28) during the early 20th Century, and the ways in which racist and classist State and charity initiatives of the time were aimed at educating both mothers and potential mothers, in addition to monitoring the caring of children. Furthermore, the notion that mothers were responsible for the 'construction of the character of their children', also became a

predominant view in the mid 20th century in the UK, through which, maintained the belief that working-class and ethnic minority mothers were somehow deficient in their mothering (Jamieson, 1997).

The latter part of the 19th century in the UK, also highlighted the presence of the unmarried mother as a cause of moral, social, and political concern (Spensky, 1992, Jamieson, 1997). At that time, views of the 'family' that were reflected in social policy and welfare programmes had a tremendous impact on the treatment of unmarried mothers (Spensky, 1992, Land and Lewis, 1997, Skevik, 2001). The stigmatisation of the unmarried mother can also be traced back to England's New Poor Law (NPL) of 1834, which implicated working-class and poor unmarried mothers as deviating from the reproductive norms (Spensky, 1992). This resulted in the punishing of unmarried women by making them solely financially responsible for their child, which often led to them being subjected to the confines of the workhouse (Spensky, 1992). Although the NPL was eventually abolished, the emergence of the Beveridge Report (1942) resulted in the development of social policy that acknowledged the importance of the social role of motherhood⁵. Yet, these policies continued to view 'non-working' unmarried mothers as 'deviant' through being subjected to a meagre, means-tested allowance reflecting the state's moral and political agenda aimed at 'preserving' the family (Jamieson, 1997, Skevik, 2001) and thus, developing ways in which to 'regulate' and monitor women's sexuality (Spensky, 1992). Yet, through her research on British reformatory and industrial

⁵ There are numerous debates regarding the effect that the Beveridge Report (1942) had on gender relations and the impact this had on married mothers that go far beyond the scope of this research. For a more in-depth exploration of these debates see Wilson (1977), Dale and Foster (1986) and Clarke et al (1987).

schools in the 1930's, Mahood (1995) has demonstrated the contradictory messages that were aimed at young women with regard to the connection (or lack thereof) between sex and motherhood. She argues that sex education was provided for the sole purpose of discussing maternal prospects and the encouraging of an early interest in child-care. However, although a young woman's maturity was based on her readiness to become a mother, this was not to include 'undue interest in, or familiarity with, the process by which it would be achieved' (Mahood, 1995:126). Hence, although it was seen as perfectly respectable to consider becoming a mother, even at what would today be considered a very early age, knowledge about how to become pregnant was not. Thus, historically, the problem was not being a young mother, but rather, being an unmarried mother. This highlights the present day social, political and moral shift in views about motherhood, and the negative attention that is aimed at young motherhood in particular.

In present day Britain, it appears that the current New Labour government is focusing on, and publicising what they view to be the problems associated with young motherhood. This is reflected in social policies and welfare programmes that are 'engaged in the business of managing motherhood' (Jamieson, 1997:28) thus demonstrating negative assumptions about the connection between age, 'race', gender, class and childrearing (Furstenberg, 1987, Phoenix, 1990, Davies, et al, 2001). Phoenix and Woollett (1991) have taken this analysis further, arguing that the reason for addressing the issue of teenage pregnancy and parenthood as a social problem is due to 'the politics of motherhood' whereby the family is perceived to be a civil institution which is important for the passing on of state ideologies. As a

result, when 'the family' changes in ways that conflict with a state's political aims, concerns about motherhood and 'the family' are expressed because state practices contain prevalent cultural constructions about women. To summarize, the current New Labour government fosters a moral view of motherhood; teenage pregnancy and young motherhood is promoted as a social problem as evidenced by the development of social inclusion strategies aimed at controlling the sexuality and the parenting practices of young women (SEU, 1999a, Scottish Office, 1999).

Teenage Motherhood as a Social Problem

The social problem discourse surrounding teenage pregnancy and young motherhood can be examined within the British political discourse in both the recent past as well as today. Over the past ten years politicians have participated in a regeneration of the social problem discourse surrounding teenage and single motherhood through the accusation that young mothers have children as a way to secure public housing (Rafferty, 1993). This is particularly evident in Murray's (1990) underclass thesis, which is often associated with pregnant teenagers, and young or lone mothers. Originally the 'underclass' was a term that was used to describe the economically marginalized however, it has since been co-opted by others, in particular Murray (1990) as a moral category (Morris, 1994, Williams, 1998). Falling into this category are the long-term unemployed, unskilled workers and young single mothers. Correspondingly, the British 'underclass' are generally identified as 'poorly qualified, white, working class young people' (Levitas, 1998) with young or lone mothers being a main component of this population (Murray, 1990). As Levitas (1998) argues:

‘young women’s delinquency manifests itself in their sexual and reproductive behaviour, the imputed irresponsibility of lone parenthood. The two are connected through the assumption that lone parents and single mothers provide inadequate parenting, with both forms of delinquency attributed to a failure of socialization, especially into the work ethic and a belief in marriage’ (p.19).

This also suggests that the popular discourse of young, lone mothers as being promiscuous, irresponsible and a threat to nuclear family values is also a gendered one (Edwards and Duncan, 1997, Mann and Roseneil, 1999).

The UK Conservative government in the 1990s has also morally implicated young mothers as sexually ‘selfish and exploitative’ whilst blaming young mothers for being a drain on society due to their dependency on state benefits (Wallbank, (2001:60). Corresponding with the Conservative government’s view of teenage pregnancy, the Labour government has also expressed concern regarding Britain having the highest rates of teenage pregnancy in Western Europe (SEU, 1999a). As such, the social problem discourse concerning teenage pregnancy is highly visible within the Social Exclusion Unit’s ‘Report on Teenage Pregnancy’ (1999) and in the Scottish Executive’s White Paper on health (Scottish Office, 1999b) which both proposed strategies aimed at decreasing teenage pregnancy. Moreover, studies which indicate that poverty, lack of educational and employment opportunities, and low self-worth are factors linked to becoming a young mother (Kiernan, 1995), are being used as evidence to support a view of young motherhood as not only a moral problem but as an increasingly social and economic concern as well (Rutman, 2002).

The social problem discourse surrounding teenage pregnancy and young motherhood indicates that, in contrast to Denney’s (1998) view that the construction of social problems has shifted from a ‘social pathological’ to a ‘value conflict’ approach, the

current government's view of 'social problems' reflects both approaches to social problems. Whereas the 'social pathological' approach focuses on alleviation of distress or elimination of troublesome behaviour (Goldiamond, 1974), the value-conflict approach stresses that problems occur 'not because things fall apart socially but because different groups in society have different interests, these interests conflict, and these conflicts precipitate conditions that at least some people regard as undesirable (Rainwater, cited in Bacchi, 1999). Hence, what is or is not perceived to be a social problem is dependent on the perspective and context in which it is viewed (Clarke and Cochrane, 1998, Denney, 1998, Smale et al, 2002). However, because both the 'Report on Teenage Pregnancy' (SEU, 1999a) and the White Paper on health (Scottish Office, 1999b) portray teenage pregnancy as a social problem for not only young women and their children, but for society more generally, it appears that the New Labour government links social problems to opinions of what constitutes a good society as well as to the behaviours or actions of individuals (Clarke and Cochrane, 1998). This suggests that the 'value-conflict' approach to addressing social problems has yet to be fully applied to current day welfare practices and social policies as they continue to view young motherhood as a moral, social and economic problem within Western society (Rutman et al, 2002). Hence, the current Labour government's political discourse on teenage pregnancy reflects both a 'value-conflict' and 'social pathological' approach to social problems. This indicates that little has changed regarding their view and understanding of teenage pregnancy and young motherhood.

Young motherhood and teenage pregnancy are not only presented as social problems within New Labour documents (SEU, 1999a, SEU, 1999b) and through social

commentary about the 'underclass' (Murray, 1990) but through evidence emerging from practice based research as well (Combs-Orme, 1993). The main responses to these issues reflect either 'interventionist' or 'preventative' programmes (Sex Education Forum, 1994, Scottish Office, 1999, Teenage Pregnancy Unit, 2000, Scottish Executive, 2001) even though thus far they have yet to prove to be an effective way of decreasing teenage pregnancy (Brown and Eisenberg, 1995). This has resulted in a breadth of literature which not only focuses on issues such as how to decrease teenage pregnancy rates, but which also aims to investigate and interrogate the sexual behaviour and knowledge of working-class, black, and other ethnic minority young women and mothers. Hence, much of what can be found with regard to young mothers' experiences of pregnancy and parenthood has resulted in a discourse that perceives young motherhood as 'a social problem' resulting from 'deviant' behaviour. Hence, corresponding with O'Brien's (1999) observation that pregnant teenagers are viewed as being both 'dangerous and endangered', much of what can be found with regard to young mothers' experiences of pregnancy and parenthood has resulted in a discourse that portrays young motherhood as a 'social problem' resulting from 'deviant' behaviour.

Concerns about why young women should not become pregnant or have a baby due to increased health risks have also been well documented (SEU, 1999a) and include: lower weight babies and higher infant mortality rates (Botting, 1998) and increased risk of post-natal depression compared to older mothers (Wilson, 1995). For example, as Angela McRobbie (2000), a researcher claiming a feminist perspective in her analysis of young motherhood states,

‘Poverty, unemployment and extreme youthfulness combined to catapult the girls into impossible circumstances. From being fresh faced 16-year-olds they became impoverished-looking clients of the state. Motherhood had pushed them towards a precocious maturity and they had no material means of subsidising their new condition’ (p.165).

Thus, rather than providing a perspective on young motherhood that stems from the perceptions of the young mothers themselves, this analysis of the impact of motherhood on teenage girls corresponds with the mainstream portrayal of the young mother as a ‘social problem’, that being a young, irresponsible and in this case, ‘precocious’ woman. Although this research was conducted and first published in 1998, McRobbie (2000) does include an updated discussion of teenage motherhood linking structural issues such as poverty, barriers to education and employment to the contributing factors influencing young women to become young mothers. However, she also continues to portray young mothers as irresponsible, passive actors. This corresponds with the current focus on teenage pregnancy and young motherhood that remains rooted in a discourse of irresponsibility that is seen as resulting in the never-ending problems that face the lives of young mothers and their children.

In a direct challenge to research that portrays young motherhood as a social problem, it has been argued that research based on the assumption that having a child at a young age will negatively influence individual behaviour and choices lacks the understanding or analysis of the circumstances in which these mothers live, including their racial, class and ethnic backgrounds (Phoenix, 1991, Davies, 2001). Moreover, it is suggested that research on and about teenage pregnancy and young motherhood has mainly been based on white, middle-class ideas about a young woman’s readiness and ability to be a mother (Phoenix, 1990, Macintyre and Cunningham-

Burley, 1993, Davies, 2001, Rutman et al, 2002). These perceptions contribute to the stereotypical portrayal of pregnant teenagers and young mothers as unemployed, irresponsible, uninformed and unfit parents (Furstenberg et al, 1987, Phoenix, 1991, Macintyre and Cunningham-Burley, 1993, Davies, 2001). In this way, both young mothers and their social workers are the subjects of state surveillance in that whilst social workers require young mothers to obey the rules of the state, they themselves are also enforced to engage in practices that reflect the views of the state (Rutman et al, 2002).

As I have demonstrated, there is a growing amount of research on teenage pregnancy and young mother that takes into account the experiences of young mothers from their point of view (Phoenix, 1991, Davies, 2001, Rutman et al, 2002). However, discussions about the reasons why young women choose to carry their baby to term continue to be distinguished or set up as distinctly different from the reasons why other women have children. In Hudson and Ineichen's (1991) view, the reasons why young women choose to carry their baby to term include:

- Genuine ignorance of the pregnancy
- Rebellion against parents
- An object to love
- To keep the father
- To achieve full adult status
- To confirm a prophecy that they are a 'bad lot'
- To gain access to housing
- Disaffection from school
- Pressure from boyfriend to keep the child
- Mistakes and poor advice about abortion
- Fatalistic acceptance

In reviewing this long list, it becomes clear that the decision to become young mothers is understood largely on the basis of age, not how they have come to these decisions. Yet, some authors assert that the reasons young women have children are

no different from the reasons 'older' women have children (Furstenberg, 1987, Phoenix and Woollett, 1991, Corlyon and McGuire 1999, Davies, 2001). In my own experience of working with young women, I agree with Burghes and Brown's (1995) assessment that the attitudes that persuade mothers to keep their babies are complex and difficult to disentangle and that decisions to see the pregnancy to term are not taken lightly. Furthermore, as Furstenberg (1987) illustrates in his research that young, black mothers' experiences of parenting are incredibly diverse, even within groups who share a racial, cultural, social and economic background. This suggests that it is important to recognise that even within homogenous groups of young women the reasons for choosing to become a parent will be varied. Hence, although the social and psychological constructions of 'normal' mothers run counter to the reality of motherhood for many women, it is young women, particularly those who are black (Phoenix 1991, Furstenburg 1987), living in care (Rutman et al, 2002), or who live areas of deprivation (Davies, 2001), who remain under the watchful eye of the state before, during and after becoming mothers. Consequently, a main aim of this study has been to 'listen' to the voices of young mothers in order to gain a better understanding of the events surrounding their pregnancies, their experiences of young motherhood, and how they assert their agency through engaging in acts of resistance toward the dominant social and political discourses surrounding teenage pregnancy and young motherhood. In addition, it will be argued more fully in later chapters, a key consequence of categorising young mothers as social problems is the omitting of their voices within social exclusion and sexual health strategies in both Scotland and England and how this contributes to their experiencing 'embodied exclusion'.

Teenage Pregnancy, Young Mothers and Social Exclusion

In the UK, issues of social exclusion and poverty are devolved responsibilities. As a result, the Social Exclusion Unit in London does not formally address these issues within a Scottish context. Nevertheless, its aims are reflected within the New Labour government in Scotland through the 'Scottish Social Inclusion Strategy', which has resulted in the setting up a range of programmes aimed at increasing social inclusion⁶. Moreover, similar to English policy, the Scottish Executive has also invested in the funding of sexual health education, service and programmes committed toward decreasing teenage pregnancies (Scottish Office, 1999b, Scottish Executive, 2000). What follows is a discussion of what social inclusion means within a UK context and the impact that this has had on the development of social exclusion/inclusion initiatives aimed at pregnant teenagers and young mothers in Scotland, England and Wales.

Social Exclusion in the UK

Although the term 'social exclusion' has a history that has developed outside of the UK, it is the way in which this term has been used to inform New Labour social exclusion initiatives between 1997 and 2001 that is of most interest here. In 1997, the Social Exclusion Unit was set up in the Prime Minister's office, with social exclusion described as 'broadly covering those people who do not have the means, material or otherwise, to participate in social, economic, political and cultural life'

⁶The language of exclusion/inclusion is used differently in English and Scottish contexts. In England, the term 'social exclusion' is used to discuss issues effecting exclusion from society. In Scotland the term 'social inclusion' or 'social justice' is more commonly used to address the same issues.

(Blair, 1998, cited in Scottish Office, 1998:2). New Labour's approach to tackling social exclusion contained five elements:

- Work for those who can;
- Security for those who cannot work;
- Attaching obligations to rights;
- Targeted local initiatives; and,
- Developing inclusive mainstream services.

The keystone to this approach is 'Third Way' politics. The 'Third Way' encompasses the philosophy and principles underpinning New Labour politics and social policy (Jordan, 2000) and is a term used by both Tony Blair (1998) and Tony Giddens (1998) to demonstrate how, as a result of this, the values of New Labour will radically change. Carling (1999) interprets the expression of 'Third Way' values as:

- Equality - equal moral worth of all human beings; equality of opportunity, not outcome, protections of the vulnerable;
- Autonomy - personal freedom, choice; political liberty;
- Community - individual responsibility, reciprocity; obligations corresponding to social rights, social inclusion as the basis for social justice;
- Democracy - empowerment, devolution of power (cited in Jordan, 2000:20).

In turn, these values are said to be reflected in the current Labour government's social exclusion initiatives (Blair, 1998).

The term 'social exclusion' is continually being contested and changes depending on what Levitas (1998) has identified as the three competing discourses of social exclusion. These discourses have been identified as the redistribution and equality discourse (RED), through which social exclusion is linked to poverty; the 'moral

underclass' discourse (MUD), that focuses on 'underclass' pathology'; and the social integration discourse (SID), that views inclusion as occurring primarily through labour market participation. Although proponents of New Labour would view its political philosophy as reflecting a RED model of inclusion, it has been debated whether or not that this is evident in social exclusion practice (Levitas, 1998). Critics have argued that it is SID discourses that are most predominant within the policies emerging from the Labour government's social exclusion unit, emphasizing as they do education, training and paid work as routes to inclusion, rather than redistribution of income and other barriers to exclusion such as 'race', gender and sexuality (Lister, 1997, Levitas, 1998, Oppenheim, 1998). Moreover it is claimed that MUD ideas are equally present, emerging out of a personal pathology approach to social problems. What follows is a brief overview of New Labour's engagement with both SID and MUD discourses and how these are reflected within social exclusion inclusion programmes aimed at increasing young and lone mothers' participation in the labour market and decreasing teenage pregnancy.

With the development of the Social Exclusion Unit, the 1997 New Labour government committed itself to a process of decreasing social exclusion through reintegrating and increasing the participation of marginalized groups within mainstream society. A major policy paper issued by the unit has been its 'Report on Teenage Pregnancy' (1999a). This report has led to the development of social exclusion policies and programmes aimed at decreasing teenage pregnancy and increasing the participation of young and lone mothers in further and higher education, training and employment schemes, all of which are aimed at increasing

labour market participation (SEU, 1999a, SEU, 1999b, Scottish Executive, 2001). One key initiative which has been developed by the Labour government's social exclusion unit has been 'Bridging the Gap' (S.E.U., 1999b) which is aimed at including marginalized young people in further education. The report on 'Bridging the Gap' argues that low levels of education and training have excluded young people between the ages of 16 and 18 years from paid employment. Consequently, the report supports the development of government policies and initiatives which will create opportunities for these young people to access and sustain their involvement in education and training schemes in order that they will 'make a better life for themselves and a bigger contribution to society' (S.E.U., 1999b). In addition, the Scottish Executive (2001), as part of their child poverty package launched in 2001, has also attempted to provide incentives for lone parents to participate in further or higher education through funding the 'Lone Parent Child Care Grant' (LPGCC). The purpose of this grant is to fund formal childcare arrangements for lone parents in order to encourage and support them in accessing education through further or higher educational institutions.

In regard to training and employment, the New Labour government has provided ongoing funding for the New Deal for Lone Parents (NDLP) (www.newdeal.gov.uk), with school children, which although not compulsory, is strongly encouraged and heavily promoted in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The New Deal initially focused on young people aged 18-24 years who claimed jobseekers allowance and aimed to support young people in gaining job-seeking skills and job readiness. This was followed by one of four options including: six months of work

experience and training within a voluntary sector organisation paid at the benefit rate with a premium; six months with an environmental task force also paid at the benefit rate with a premium; up to a year of education or training with an allowance equal to benefit levels and subsidised employment with training paid at the rate for the job. Later it was extended to other groups as in the case of the New Deal for Lone Parents, reflecting the view that paid work is the surest way out of poverty (Lund, 2002).

The New Deal for Lone Parents offers a package of support that includes the provision of personal advisors and is perhaps the strongest example of how the New Labour governments in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are attempting to decrease social exclusion. NDLP offers lone parents:

- Help to identify skills and build confidence;
- Places on programmes designed to help them to develop job search skills;
- Advice and support for the job search process;
- Advice on the benefits to which they may be entitled once they are in work;
- Help to find places on training programmes and funding to cover fares and child care costs while taking part in approved training;
- Continued in-work support to overcome transitional difficulties (Campbell, 2000:33).

Moreover, the new childcare tax credit introduced in 1999 is specifically designed to enable more women to work whilst providing increased funding toward childcare (National Childcare Strategy, 1998).

On the surface the aforementioned social welfare programmes, with the NDLP in particular, may appear to be quite a progressive and inclusive, however, their emphasis on paid work as the recognisable and valued trajectory toward social inclusion has important implications for decreasing social exclusion. As Lister

(1997) argues, 'the message is clear: for all those deemed capable of paid employment, 'work not welfare' represents the passport to social inclusion' (p.220). Yet, maintaining this view of social exclusion results in the marginalizing of other causes of exclusion (Levitas, 1998, Percy-Smith, 2000) in addition to devaluing and disregarding the unpaid domestic and caring work that is generally taken on by women. Moreover, it appears that the implications of these initiatives for young mothers are somewhat contradictory. Although accessing an education or training programme or engaging in paid employment is perceived to be of higher value than 'mothering', mothering is presented as an important position that carries valued responsibilities, so much so that there is a need for the surveillance of young and/or low income mothers and their children. Moreover, as the interviews with the young mothers who participated in this study began to unfold, it has also become increasingly apparent that these initiatives will hold very little relevance in the context of their culture and class positioning. As such, rather than providing an in-depth analysis of these initiatives, what is more relevant to this study are the priorities and values held by the young mothers in regard to their mothering, and how these initiatives have thus far failed to take into account their experiences as working-class and poor young mothers.

As stated earlier, the Scottish Executive has a remit to develop social inclusion policies and programmes that are relevant to the lives of people living in Scotland. However, in light of Scotland's engagement with the 'New Deal' programmes outlined above and its funding of the LPCCG, it appears that the Scottish Executive's strategies and programmes largely reflect the aims and objectives put forth by Westminster and the Social Exclusion Unit. Similarities between the strategies put

forward by the Social Exclusion Unit and the Scottish Executive's social inclusion strategies are also evident through the Scottish Executive's promise to increase social inclusion through developing strategies aimed at decreasing teenage pregnancy in Scotland. However, it could be argued that there are inconsistencies in the way in which reducing teenage pregnancy is to be achieved in Scotland. Most notably, this can be seen in the lack of formal sexual health policy that would ensure access to sexual health education and information and services to all young people.

In 1999 the Scottish Office published their plans for the development of a sexual health strategy in Scotland. Their aims included to decrease unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections; to enhance provision of sexual health services; and to promote a broad understanding of sexual health and sexual relationships (Scottish Office, 1999a). Three years later, this initiative was more fully documented in the Scottish Executive's report, 'Health in Scotland' (NHS, 2002) that outlined the intentions of a Scottish Executive appointed multi-interest Reference Group, led by the Public Health Institute of Scotland (PHIS), to guide the development of a National Sexual Health Strategy (Health in Scotland, 2002). However, rather than being fully addressed though the Health in Scotland report (NHS, 2002), the health of young people, including the issues of teenage pregnancy, is now addressed within the Scottish Executive's 'Annual Report on Social Justice' (2002). However, the aims are similar in that the expert group has been set up to improve the sexual health of Scotland's young people through focusing on the continued need to improve sex education for young people and to reduce unwanted teenage pregnancies. However, almost four years since the Scottish Executive stated their commitment to decreasing teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), sexual

health professionals in Scotland have been speaking out about their frustration over the lack of any formal sexual health strategy in Scotland (Sunday Herald, 17 Aug, 2003). Moreover, the Scottish Executive appears to have also failed to formalise the suggestions recommended in the 'Report on the Working Group on Sex Education in Scottish Schools' (Scottish Executive, 2000) even though the working group put forth recommendations for providing comprehensive sexual health education three years ago.

Inconsistencies may also be considered to be present within the Scottish Executive funded 'Healthy Respect' project in Edinburgh and the Lothians, set up in 2000 to 'foster the responsible sexual behaviour on the part of Scotland's young people with emphasis on the avoidance of unwanted teenage pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases' (Scottish Office, 1999). This project evolved out of the White Paper produced in 1999, 'Towards a Healthier Scotland', which set a target for reducing the pregnancy rate among 13-15 year olds by 20% between 1995 and 2010. To achieve this target, the Scottish Executive provided £3m over 3 years to 'Healthy Respect', a demonstration project run by a multi-agency partnership led by Lothian Health. The 'Healthy Respect' project has also expressed a commitment to including parents in this process through the 'Parent's Project' which aims to encourage and support parents to be involved in the sexual health education of their children. It has been reported that through working in partnership with local agencies, 'Healthy Respect' has consulted with parents and foster parents in specific areas of Lothian, which have informed Healthy Respect's future work. It has also been reported that parents have been very positive about Healthy Respect as a source of information for themselves and their child. (Scottish Executive online, august, 18, 2003). However,

the interviews with the young mothers in this study indicate that this has not been their experience⁷. Rather, as will be demonstrated in later chapters, the young mothers from this study who attempted to participate in the 'Healthy Respect' project had this request turned down at the onset.

This highlights another limitation of the Scottish Executive's commitment to increasing social inclusion, that being, the failure to proactively include the voices of young mothers in the development of sexual health strategies. This is also evident in the initial plans of the Scottish Executive's sexual health strategy as the membership of the 'expert' group involved in designing this strategy fails to include the presence of young mothers, and more generally, any young people at all. This suggests that the views of young people may not be considered to be a valuable contribution toward the process of developing sexual health education and services.

It appears then, that the social and political control over the fecund bodies of working-class and poor young women in Scotland is reflected through the New Labour government's social exclusion documents, strategies and policies which are largely aimed at decreasing teenage pregnancy (SEU, 1999). Whilst these strategies have resulted in positive outcomes for some young women, for working-class and poor young women in Scotland this has also created new ground from which to monitor and police their sexual, antenatal, and postnatal behaviour. Moreover, the government's failure to include the voices of young women, pregnant teenagers and

⁷ Three of the young mothers from Stepping Stones who attended the launch of the 'Healthy Respect' project in Edinburgh on the 13th of November, 2000, were met with a negative response upon directly asking if there was some way in which they could participate or be involved in this project. Two of the young women asked a second time at which point they were told that someone from the project would be in touch. Two years on, the young mothers had not been contacted by 'Healthy Respect'.

young mothers in the development of appropriate and effective sexual health strategies may also result in further marginalizing their needs and experiences. This research will therefore demonstrate how age, class and gender are used to deny legitimacy to the sexual health needs and experiences of working-class and poor young women in Scotland, and how this results in their experience of both social and embodied exclusion.

Young Motherhood and Citizenship

I have argued that for New Labour, the notion of citizenship is closely tied to participation in the labour market. Since this maintains the notion of the stereotype of the young mother as 'welfare scrounger', or as someone who has had a child for the sole purpose of social housing (Murray, 1990, Rafferty, 1993), this view of citizenship has serious consequences for the many young mothers who depend on income support and housing benefit. At the same time, there has been an increase in the social and political rhetoric surrounding the notion of the 'active citizen' indicating that under New Labour, citizenship responsibilities also include engaging in less formal acts of citizenship such as the unpaid participation and contribution of citizens to their communities. Although young mothers may have access to the formal rights of citizenship such as social welfare provision and the right to vote, their moral, social, political and economical position under New Labour indicates that young mothers will continue to remain excluded from the social and political experiences associated with substantive citizenship. This highlights the need to contest what it means to be viewed and treated as a citizen under New Labour, in that at the present time, the social positioning of young motherhood excludes young

mothers from being viewed as, and at times from engaging in, acts of citizenship. In turn, what follows is a discussion of the theoretical debates surrounding the notion of citizenship and active citizenship, and the connections between citizenship and social exclusion under New Labour. In addition, feminist perspectives on citizenship will also be considered in order to demonstrate my own understanding and criticisms of New Labour's social exclusion policies and programmes and the impact this may have on young mothers' experiences of substantive citizenship and being active citizens.

Understanding Citizenship

Notions of citizenship shift and change under different political paradigms and, as previously stated, New Labour appears to have taken on board political views of citizenship held by both the New Right and the Social Democratic Paradigm. In order to provide a critical understanding of young mothers' experiences of citizenship in the UK and, more specifically in Scotland, it is first necessary to illustrate both the New Right and Social Democratic values underpinning New Labour's view of citizenship.

Under New Right thinking, citizenship is mainly concerned with civil and political rights and thus generally takes on a traditional understanding of freedom and liberty thus adhering to notions of individualism and inequality. Moreover, for followers of the New Right, liberty is understood as the absence of coercion unless it benefits everyone equally and individualism is the liberty to pursue one's own interests whereby everyone is entitled to equality under the law. This means that the only time in which government interference is accepted is in order to prevent harm to

others or in the event that one is unable to carry out legal obligations. Proponents of the New Right also maintain that the role of the state should be primarily concerned with activities that guarantee the markets ability to function with the only other concerns being the law, order, defence and a minimum standard of welfare. As a result, under the New Right it is thought that everyone should provide for his or her own needs through work, savings, and the acquisition of property and only those who do not carry out these obligations (the unfit, lazy, inferior) will encounter problems (Mullaly, 1993). In turn, this perspective seldom considers structural or environmental sources of social and economic problems but instead, perceives them as 'individual' problems. This is perhaps most strongly demonstrated in the New Right's opposition to state responsibility for the provision and regulation of social goods such as health and education (Hayek, 1973), and hence, their belief in a 'minimal state' (Nozick, 1972)⁸. Moreover, although the New Right believes in 'equal' rights, it assumes a level playing field when vying for these rights, thus exacerbating existing social, economic and political inequalities experienced by marginalized citizens. As will be argued further on in this section, New Labour demonstrates the New Rights propensity toward taking on an economic and moralistic approach to social welfare through viewing participation in the labour market as the main route to social inclusion.

New Labour, with its commitment to social welfare policies and programmes, also embraces some of the values associated with the social democratic paradigm. Drawing on Marshall's (1964) expansion of what constitutes citizenship, the social

⁸From: Nozick, Robert (1975). *Anarchy, State and Utopia*. Oxford: Blackwell.

democratic paradigm recognises that alongside civic and political participation, as the prerequisites for formal citizenship, there should also be more substantive criteria that would provide the individual with social rights. For Marshall, 'citizenship' comprised not only civil and political rights, but also an expansion of the term to include *social* rights. Consequently, access to economic welfare and security in areas of social life that would allow persons a more 'equal' chance through socialised institutions such as education and welfare services were understood to be a right as opposed to merely a privilege. In Marshall's view, the ability of any individual to exercise civil and political rights is substantially affected by the inequalities of the class system. However, although social democrats argue that genuine freedom ought to be sought through creating conditions for social equality where a minimum standard of welfare will be created debates continue about why and how this philosophy should be established (Coote, 1992, Plant, 1992, Daherendorf, 1994). Although these debates go well beyond the scope of this research, it is important to state that in Britain welfare recipients continue to be stigmatised as a result of the 'moral condemnation' aimed at those people who receive benefit (Morris, 1994). Furthermore, taking a gendered analysis of this issue also indicates that this is a particularly difficult position for young mothers to be in. This is because even though they may not have a large enough income to be self-supporting, engaging in full time employment will conflict with the time they need to provide full time care to their children (Morris, 1994). This demonstrates the spirit of the current New Labour government because although it reflects the values of a social democratic paradigm in regard to the maintenance of a welfare state, it continues to attach negative attributes to those who are in need of social welfare and income support.

New Labour, Community and the Active Citizen

In order to more fully understand the connection between New Labour's view of citizenship, active citizenship, and the limitations of social exclusion policies in regard to the experiences of young mothers, it is first necessary to demonstrate how these policies have been influenced by an orthodox Communitarian⁹ agenda (Labour Party, 1997). Tam (1998) states that, in its broadest sense, Communitarian approaches

‘point to the need for a new agenda for politics and citizenship. They set out the ways in which a much more inclusive form of community should be developed, socially and politically, to overcome the corrosive effects of individualism, and protect all citizens from authoritarian threats’ (p.2).

However, it appears that New Labour's interpretation of Communitarianism emphasizes more strongly the role of individuals rather than the role of state in achieving social inclusion. Communitarianism as it is presented within ‘Third Way’ politics has been heavily influenced by Amitai Etzioni (1995), who advocates for increased moral responsibility of citizens to their communities in order to promote the common good⁹. For new Labour, the main priority has therefore been envisaged as an increased role of the ‘active citizen’ within British society. Assiter (1999) explains this further in terms of the importance and value of citizens’ involvement through actively concerning themselves with the rights and responsibilities they have in relation to the community in order to promote the common good. The problem with this, Williams (1998) notes, is that ‘The Third Way focuses on community almost entirely as a system of social control, with members holding each other

⁹ A complete examination of the Communitarian debate goes far beyond the scope of this study. For a complete introduction to communitarianism see Amitai Etzioni (1997, 1993).

responsible for orderly conduct and work contributions, and thus providing the 'glue' to bind the inclusive society together' (cited in Jordan, 2000:50).

One key way in which the New Labour government has attempted to achieve a 'more inclusive form of community' has been through the move toward citizenship education. This is reflected in documents which demonstrate the way in which citizenship education has become a priority in both the Scottish and English secondary school curriculum (Advisory Group on Citizenship, 1998, Scottish Executive, 2003). In turn, the current national priorities for secondary education in Scotland include addressing what New Labour views as the values attached to citizenship such as, teaching pupils to respect themselves, one another, and other members of their community and society. In addition, the citizenship curriculum also aims to teach young people about the duties and responsibilities associated with citizenship, such as the importance of engaging in community based participation, in a democratic society (Scottish Executive, 2003). Yet, it has also been suggested that when participation becomes intrinsically linked to citizenship rights and responsibilities, feelings of exclusion may become even more powerful, since the structural issues that prevent people from participating are ignored (Wharf Higgins, 1999). Furthermore, government policies and community organisations may serve to compound this issue when they do not take into account the ways in which people 'participate' that do not fall under current definitions of 'active citizenship'. Consequently, the citizen participation system may be unappealing and intimidating to a great deal of people as it may not reflect the importance of the active choices they make in their daily lives.

Finally, it is the idea of 'social capital', which brings together the New Labour government's agenda on social inclusion with its concern to increase active citizenship. Social capital is understood to be what is necessary for enhancing quality of life through extending social networks and building institutions that will strengthen the social and economic reputation of an area (Commission on Social Justice, 1994). Yet social capital tends to be more easily obtained by those who already have it. As a result, the Commission suggests that there is a need for local people to take responsibility for becoming involved in working toward developing ways to attract social capital into their communities. This represents the spirit of the current government's agenda on tackling social inclusion in both Scotland and England, indicating that in order to truly experience social inclusion, and thus substantive citizenship, there must be an assurance that programme recipients 'pull their weight', and that they do so in a way that is recognisable to the state. In Scotland, this vision has been outlined in the Social Inclusion Strategy (Scottish Office, 1999b), which aims to encourage socially excluded groups to become more involved in their communities. It is unclear, however, how this will impact on the experience of young mothers who, regardless of their social and political endeavours, have thus far failed to be recognised as active citizens. Nevertheless, as will be discussed more fully in the following chapters, the young mothers who participated in this study demonstrated a variety of ways in which they contributed to their communities. More importantly however, are the barriers and facilitators that impacted on their individual experiences of deciding when and how to participate in their communities. Hence, as will be demonstrated in later chapters, understanding why and how young mothers' contribute to their communities is a complex issue that

necessitates taking into account the personal and institutional barriers to community-based participation. This further suggests that there is a call for developing a broader understanding of the interface between young mothers and citizenship that provides a location from which to view their activities as existing along a 'continuum of active citizenship'.

This section has highlighted how 'active' citizenship discourses that suggest citizens go beyond their right to vote and engage in other duties that will supposedly help them and their communities, may go even further in creating feelings of alienation (Yuval Davis and Werbner, 1999). Nevertheless, in Britain the 'active citizen' has been put forward as an alternative to the welfare state through which the citizen gives time and money to the community in a way that corresponds to the rhetoric of government. This has, and will continue to impact on the lives of young mothers, especially in light of the current plans of both government and social welfare systems to implement social inclusion policies and programmes. This is particularly relevant to the lives of young mothers in that in the UK it is extremely hard for women to be mothers and workers, yet it is increasingly the case that the only route to full citizenship is through paid labour and active involvement in the public sphere (Lister, 1997, Smart, 1999, Yuval-Davis and Werbner, 1999). At the same time, the most important policy debate in recent times even with a change of government, concerns fears about the declining parental responsibility and the 'inadequate' socialisation of children that contribute to the perception of young motherhood as a social problem. Thus there continues to be a mixed message coming from government which on the one hand cries out for the importance of 'good' parenting, whilst on the other hand seems to exclude the act of mothering as engaging in the duties associated with

active citizenship. The question therefore remains as to whether or not current definitions of 'active citizenship' reflect the ways in which young mothers display their participation as active citizens, in addition to highlighting the connection between young mothers experiences of social exclusion and citizenship. One suggestion may be that in order to recognise the duties engaged in by young mothers, what is called for is a broader understanding of active citizenship that views acts of citizenship as existing along a continuum. As will be demonstrated in later chapters, this would result in the inclusion of a range of activities that are in some way connected to the duties associated with motherhood, and that also have positive implications in one's personal and political life, for their community, and for society more generally.

Feminist Perspectives on Citizenship, Active Citizenship, and Mothering

As I have discussed, the New Labour view of citizenship reflects the values of both the New Right and Social Democratic political paradigms, through providing a welfare state that is mainly concerned with decreasing social exclusion through increasing participation in the labour market. At the same, these programmes also maintain the stigma attached welfare recipients whilst failing to address other routes to social exclusion and the question of women's formal and substantive experiences of citizenship. Hence, although a socially democratic structure of society works toward making formal rights more accessible to those who are socially deprived through the maintenance of social rights, women continue to face barriers to substantive citizenship as a result of their gender, 'race', ethnicity, class and ability and thus continue to encounter inequalities that are not addressed under universalistic

welfare provisions or redistribution schemes. There are a wide variety of approaches to how women's citizenship can be achieved which demonstrate the multitude of views aimed at how to theorise and work toward a view of citizenship that reflects the complexity of women's lives (Bock and James, 1992), yet these debates go far beyond the scope of this research. In the context of this research, however, perhaps the most important issue that feminists have drawn attention to is the relationship between women's private and public lives (Cree, 2000), and the distinction between the private/domestic and public/political spheres (Okin, 1998)¹⁰.

Debates surrounding the private/public dichotomy are crucial to discussing women's experiences of citizenship because women have traditionally been relegated to the private sphere where familial duties and obligations are carried out. Moreover, whereas the public sphere was considered as the space in which to engage in citizenship rights and responsibilities, the private sphere has acted as a mechanism in women's oppression in that it is typically viewed as separate from political participation (Young, 1990a, Phillips, 1993). Consequently, in society's adoption of the private/public dichotomy, women have been prevented from achieving formal or substantive citizenship status and rights. In recent years, however, feminist political theorists have put forth criticisms of the public/private dichotomy (Elshtain, 1974 and 1981, Eisenstein, 1979, Pateman, 1983, Phillips, 1991, Bock and James, 1992, and 1993, Okin, 1998). Prokhovnick (1998) has developed a convincing argument against the utility of this public/private dichotomy. In her view, arguments that either advocate for women's equal participation in the public sphere, or for their

¹⁰ I will at times refer to this dichotomy as public/domestic in order to address these issues within the dichotomy most frequently used in political theory (Moller Okin, 1998).

access to employment on an equal basis to men whilst sustaining their responsibilities in the home maintain fundamental limitations in feminist perspectives on citizenship. Moreover, Prokhovnick argues that feminist debates that centre on the notion of the public/domestic dichotomy ignore the fact that women who choose to engage in mainly so-called 'private' matters such as mothering, are in fact exercising citizenship.

In regard to the young mothers who participated in this research, challenging the public/domestic dichotomy is a particularly important point in that it fails to recognize how being a mother provided the young women with both a purpose and a means through which to engage in their community. Hence, rather than experiencing young motherhood as a barrier to active citizenship, the young women in this study were able to use their role and identity as a mother a route to community based participation. Moreover, 'motherhood' also provided them with a position from which to illustrate the ways in which they asserted personal agency. Hence, whilst in a broad sense, agency refers to the capacity to act, it is also relative in that women can 'act' even within subordinate positions. As will be discussed more fully in later chapters, this was achieved through engaging in acts of resistance to the social, moral and political discourses surrounding teenage pregnancy and young motherhood, particularly in the light of New Labour's view of social inclusion and active citizenship. Furthermore, in relation to the experiences of the young mothers who participated in this study, it will also be argued that although class and culture played a role in their 'decision' to become young mothers, the young mothers also demonstrated how they asserted personal agency through engaging in various acts of

resistance; that being, resistance to the social and moral assumptions surrounding young motherhood in addition to their resistance to the various cultural and moral pressures existing in their own communities.

Postmodernism, Feminism, and Young Mothers

There is, however, another more pressing dimension regarding young mothers' exclusion from citizenship that appears to be fully addressed within feminist citizenship theorists. Although feminist arguments recognise the interconnectedness between the private and public spheres, its main limitation is that it fails to recognise that for young mothers, there is no such thing as a private sphere¹¹. Hence, the young mother who chooses to stay at home with her children is provided with less value, less rights and less recognition and subsequently, perceived to be less of a citizen even though she carries out these duties in the public sphere, under the gaze of policy makers, social workers and health visitors, open to surveillance and condemnation in ways that are not the case for other members of society.

This issue suggest the opening up of a different postmodern feminist perspective on young mothers and citizenship. Firstly, in line with feminist perspectives on citizenship, it is accepted that the inclusion of gender on its own is not enough to address the barriers to citizenship experienced by women. Secondly, it must be understood that for young mothers, the public and private/domestic sphere is not merely interconnected, but in many instances, one and the same. For those young mothers who experience a process of simultaneously living/working in both the

¹¹ This is also very much the case for young mother in care. For a more in depth understanding of the experience of young mothers in care see Rutman et al (2002).

private and the public sphere, the notion of the private sphere will become increasingly questionable, if not obsolete. As a result, even if mothering is viewed as political and as demonstrating active citizenship, the question still remains as to how it will be politically and socially valued when engaged in by mothers who are deemed to be 'deviant' in society.

These arguments will be particularly important for feminists who are engaged in current debates connecting 'active citizenship', 'community' and 'caring'. For example, as King and Wickham-Jones (1999) argue, 'New Labour's position assumes that an individual can contribute to society through working as a paid child carer but not as an unpaid mother, though both individuals carry out the same tasks and make identical contributions' (p.277). This suggests that one consequence of state funded programmes such as the NDLP is that mothers on benefit may be encouraged to leave their own children with others in order to be paid to care for someone else's children. These types of programmes highlight the way in which New Labour policy and practice enforces a division between active/passive, public/private and responsible/irresponsible acts of citizenship but one that feminists have thus far failed to adequately address. It may be that postmodern feminist arguments will provide a more useful position from which to develop a broader understanding of young mothers' citizenship through providing a basis for avoiding the tendency to construct theory that makes generalisations between women (Nicholson, 1990).

Based on the above discussion, this study will draw attention to the limitations of New Labour's view of citizenship whilst taking into consideration feminist arguments that contest the usefulness of separating the private or personal from the public or political (Yuval-Davis, 1997a, Prokhovnic, 1998, Lister, 1999, Werbner, 1999). This study will also reflect a stance that recognises that whilst women have been viewed as separate from the public/political sphere, many of their experiences demonstrate a close connection between the two (Pateman, 1983, Dominelli, 1995). This is particularly relevant to the lives of poor or working-class and ethnic minority young mothers as a result of the increased social control over the family by the state and thus, the possibility (and for many, the eventuality) of being 'policed' through state mechanisms (Donzelot, 1979). In turn, this study has also drawn on feminist research that has been attentive to the ways in which women's personal circumstances are structured through public mechanisms such as the law, social policy and welfare practices (Pateman, 1983) in that they are useful for considering the limitations of the public/domestic framework regarding women's citizenship in general, and in considering young mothers' experiences of social exclusion and their positioning as active citizens under New Labour.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the main themes and theoretical concepts that will be addressed throughout this study. This has included an account of the political and social discourses that reflect a view of teenage pregnancy and young motherhood as a social problem within the UK and the government policies and strategies that have subsequently materialised. I have argued that the social problem discourse

surrounding teenage pregnancy and young motherhood has been thinly veiled under what has been identified as the Labour government's commitment to tackling social exclusion. It has also been argued that current social exclusion policies reinforce and uphold barriers to substantive citizenship, particularly in regard to the lives of young mothers who, due to their moral, social, political and economic positioning under New Labour, fail to be recognised as active citizens.

Taken in the context of feminist debates about barriers to women's citizenship, this indicates that it is necessary to further examine what it means for young mothers to experience social inclusion and therefore, substantive citizenship rights. At the same time, this study will also argue that, at the present time, there continues to be a narrow view of the division between the personal and the structural barriers to active citizenship. One way in which this study will respond to this issue will be through highlighting the young women's expressions of personal agency through their resistance to the mainstream social and political discourses regarding young motherhood. In addition, the young mothers' resistance to cultural pressures based on class, and in one case, religion, will further demonstrate how agency provides one way in which to address the tension between the personal and the structural dimensions impacting on their choices surrounding pregnancy, motherhood, and community based participation. Furthermore, it will also be argued that one way in which to reconcile this issue is to view active citizenship as existing along a continuum in order to highlight the personal and structural facilitators and barriers to community based participation. This will be achieved through signifying the various ways in which the young mothers performed active citizenship duties and how some of these activities were achieved in ways that would be viewed as accepted by the

state, whilst other activities continue to be undervalued. What follows is a response to these issues through engaging in an examination of the experiences of young mothers in light of the current social political environment in the UK aimed at increasing social inclusion and active citizenship.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Introduction

Through drawing on both feminist and postmodern theoretical perspectives, this research will demonstrate both my personal and professional commitment to developing social work practice and theory, and to address the multiple ways in which young mothers have, and continue to be, a marginalized group in British society. Consequently, one of the aims of this research has been to create a space from which to represent the numerous ‘voices’ that have contributed to this research, and in turn, generate social work theory that will be relevant to both the participants of this research and those concerned with the developing socially inclusive social work practice and policy. This has been a challenging process that has influenced my desire to critically examine views about and practices aimed at young mothers within a postmodern feminist theoretical framework. Both these perspectives have influenced my methods of research, data analysis, and theoretical considerations whilst affirming for me, the utility of what I will continue to identify as a ‘postmodern feminist framework for social work research’. What follows is an illustration of the ways that feminist methodology and postmodern theory have contributed to the shaping of my own theoretical perspective and in turn, to my decision to situate this research within a ‘postmodern-feminist framework for social work research’.

The Contribution of Feminist Methodology to my Study

In an attempt to place the lives and experiences of young mothers at the centre of this research, I have drawn on a number of feminist arguments that have, in part, influenced the methodological approach and tools that have been used in this study. Feminist approaches to social science research originally developed in response to the positivist research paradigm which, through its emphasis on quantitative research methods, limited the ability to portray an authentic representation of women's experiences (Maynard and Purvis, 1995). Feminist researchers argue that social science research that has been conducted within a positivist paradigm and that has relied solely on quantitative methods have represented a traditional 'male' form of knowing that values characteristics such as the 'detachment' of the researcher, the collection of 'objective' social facts and a 'value free' science. This resulted in the incorporation of a 'male epistemological stance' that used men's power to understand the world from their own point of view and that has therefore omitted or distorted the experiences of women (Mies, 1983, Stanley and Wise, 1983, Maynard and Purvis, 1995). Moreover, these authors have also argued that the methodological principles of value free, neutral, uninvolved, hierarchical, non-reciprocal approaches in the relationship between research subject and research object does not help to explore those areas of social life that have remained invisible, that being, the lives and experiences of women.

It is important to acknowledge that feminist approaches to methodology are contested within feminism itself and as such, is a continually evolving method of social science research. Presenting these debates go well beyond the scope of this research however, what will be illustrated here, are those aspects of feminist theory that have influenced the way in which I position myself as a feminist researcher. Hammersley (1995), has documented the emergence of four distinct themes within the feminist methodological framework. These include, a central concern with gender and gender asymmetry; valuing personal experience as opposed to the scientific method; a rejection of the hierarchy in the research relationship, and the positioning of emancipation as the primary goal of feminist research. Furthermore, Stanley and Wise (1993) argue that just as there is a relationship between theory and practice within feminist theory, there should also be a relationship between theory, experience and research. Implicit in the relationship between theory, experience and research in regard to women is the development of a 'feminist epistemology', that being, a feminist theory of 'knowledge'. Feminist epistemology is acquired through an analysis of research that contributes to the analysis of and about women's lives and in turn, to a growth of knowledge about women's experiences (Harding, 1991, Stanley and Wise, 1993, Swigorski, 1994). Some feminists believe that in order to obtain this knowledge, it is necessary to take a feminist standpoint that recognises that 'the less powerful members of society experience a different reality as a consequence of their oppression' (Swigorski, 1994:390). Hence, standpoint theory, in its commitment to addressing issues of power and powerlessness through prioritising the knowledge of the oppressed, argues that research rooted in the positioning of

marginalized groups of people will more effectively represent their experiences and social realities.

Many feminists advocate for the use of qualitative methods when engaging in social science research, and will go as far to argue that qualitative research methods are an intrinsic part of the feminist paradigm. However, contrary to these arguments, feminist researchers have also contributed to, and advocated for the development of quantitative methods in feminist research (Jayaratne, 1983). Moreover, the use of qualitative methods in and of themselves is not specific to feminism. Rather, qualitative research method has been a part of social science research more generally and as such, has its own history of development independent of feminism (Maynard and Purvis, 1995, Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002). As a result, feminists are now contributing toward philosophical and practical debates about what makes feminist research 'feminist', in addition to highlighting some of the theoretical and practical dilemmas that can arise through carrying out qualitative research (Ribbens and Edwards, 1998).

Ribbens and Edwards (1998), argue that academic research has been presented in a 'public' and 'malestream' way, resulting in issues regarding the interpretation and analysis of the research participant's experiences. This is especially problematic since women's issues have also traditionally been pushed to the margins of social science research or ignored in their entirety. Consequently, feminist researchers using qualitative methods need to recognise the power of discourse in the translation and representation process as it makes its way to an academic audience. Hence, qualitative researchers must constantly confront themselves with the issue of what



knowledge is produced and for whom. It therefore follows that another ethical dilemma faced by feminist researchers is the impact that being a participant in the research may have on the researched. Feminist researchers have recognised the need to become increasingly aware of the inevitability of the power dimension inherent in the researcher/participant relationship and to locate the position in which they are situated within the research (Ribbens and Edwards, 1998). This issue has been explored by Oakley (1980), in her research on motherhood. Oakley (1980) suggests that,

‘When a feminist interviews women...it becomes clear that, in most cases, the goal of finding out about people through interviewing is best achieved when the relationship of interviewer and interviewee is non-hierarchical, and when the interviewer is prepared to invest his or her own personal identity in the relationship’ (1980:41).

However, it is important to recognise that power cannot be eradicated entirely as a result of the power imbalance inherent in the researcher/participant relationship (Finch, 1993). Hence, power in the context of research is not necessarily something that can be avoided. Rather, it may be that the more realistic response may be to find ways in which to minimise power and to ensure that power is used responsibly and sensitively through constant examination and reflection (Finch, 1993, Wolf, 1993). These are issues that I found that I had to continually reflect on throughout the course of my fieldwork in that the young mothers, for a number of related reasons, often viewed me as someone they could trust to understand and represent their experiences in an empathetic manner. This has been a particularly interesting (and somewhat disconcerting) learning experience for me and as such, will be discussed more fully further on in this chapter.

Perhaps the most contested area for debate within feminist research today surrounds the issue of being able to generalise feminist knowledge. Although a feminist epistemological stance views women's experiences as the starting point for feminist analysis and knowledge, it has been argued that the notion of 'experience' must be problematised since individuals do not necessarily possess the sufficient knowledge to explain everything about their lives. Moreover, there is also the question of whether or not all women, particularly women from developing or third world countries, perceive their experiences as being explained through a feminist analysis; in fact, many Women of Colour and Third World Women in the United States challenge the essentialism existing in feminist epistemology (Wolf, 1993). A growing number of feminists believe that feminist research on men and masculinity is an integral part of understanding women's experiences (Cavanagh and Cree, 1996, Popay, et al, 1998). They contend that there is no longer the belief that to be engaging in feminist research we must only be 'women researching women' but that there can be male researchers and research participants involved in this process. These issues put forth a direct challenge to the utility of feminist standpoint within feminist epistemology that maintains that the gender of the researched to be the central characteristic that best represents a woman's experience and knowledge.

These debates have emerged partially as a result of the tensions that exist between feminists, and also in regard to criticisms aimed at questioning the value of postmodernism to feminist theory. What I will be presenting here is an argument in favour of engaging in a postmodern feminist theoretical perspective within the context of researching the lives of women. However, it is first important to

recognize that critics of this approach argue that a postmodern feminist perspective is in danger of obstructing the possibility of working toward women's emancipation (Lovibond, 1989, Harstock, 1990, Brodrib, 1992). With regard to social work practice more specifically, Ife (1999) argues that postmodernism 'requires social workers to abandon the values which form the very core of social work practice' (Ife, 1999:211). However, as discussed earlier, the framework for my research corresponds more closely with feminist researchers and theorists and who argue that 'feminism' is a modernist concept that generalises from the experiences of western, white, middle class women by ignoring the multiple differences that exist *between* women. Postmodern feminism has attempted to address these multiplicities by providing a basis for avoiding the tendency to construct theory that makes generalisations between women (Nicholson, 1990). Consequently, post-modern feminist theorists suggest that while gender identity gives substance to the idea of sisterhood, it does so at the cost of repressing differences among women such race, class, ethnicity, sexuality and ability. Finally, these theorists have also argued that gender identity is an essentialist category that is insufficient when attending to the theoretical prerequisites for dealing with diversity despite widespread commitment to accepting it politically. As put forward by Fraser and Nicholson (1990), the most important advantage of the post-modern approach is that,

"Such practice is increasingly a matter of alliances rather than one of unity around a universally shared interest or identity. It recognizes that the diversity of women's needs or experiences means that no single solution on issues like childcare, social security, and housing can be adequate for all. Thus, the underlying premise of this practice is that, while some women share some common interests and share some common enemies, such commonalities are by no means universal...(instead we need)...the practice of feminisms...a richer, more complex feminist solidarity essential for overcoming the oppression of women in its endless variety and monotonous similarity" (p.35).

These debates have been central to my own consideration of feminist perspectives on research and subsequently, on the tools I have chosen to use for researching and analysing the lives of young mothers.

In summary, feminist theories about research and representation have greatly contributed to the development of my own views on researching the lives of young mothers. However, as I have argued, there are a number of limitations to engaging in a purely feminist framework for research that have been addressed and resolved through considering the usefulness of combining feminist and postmodern theory. What follows is a discussion of the postmodern theoretical tools I have found useful throughout the context of my research.

The Contribution of Postmodern Theory to my Study

Although the past five to ten years have seen a number of social work theorists contribute to the development of postmodern social work theory (Leonard, 1997, Pease and Fook, 1999, Rossiter, 2000), this is an area of theory that continues to remain on the margins of social work discourse. Nevertheless, what has been written about the relationship between social work, feminism, and postmodernism has had a major influence on how I analysed the findings that emerged out of my study, and the implications I believe this will have for social work practice and research.

Traditionally, social work research may be conceptualised as reflecting a 'modernist' theoretical perspective that is concerned with issues of social justice aimed at discovering the 'truth' about the experiences and needs of marginalized groups of

people. This corresponds with Marxist, feminist and black emancipatory theories that suggest that people from the same class, gender or 'race' respectively, share the experience of belonging to that category in a similar way. However, the disadvantage of viewing experiences of oppression through a modernist lens is that this relies heavily on universal solutions that tend to silence, rather than give voice, to the very people whom social workers attempt to support (Pease and Fook, 1999). This is perhaps best articulated by Leonard (1997), who argues that, 'modernity is the construction of human beings as objects, as bearers of ideologies by which individuals can embody a certain form of racial purity, or a biological destiny, or a revolutionary commitment...thereby minimizing the multiple identities that individuals embrace' (p.8). One response to this line of argument has been an attempt to address the inadequacies of traditional methods of practice and research through developing critical approaches that can both work toward the emancipation of oppressed groups whilst engaging in action directed at social change (Healy, 2000). This approach emphasises a commitment to aligning one's self with the oppressed or marginalized through decreasing the power imbalance inherent in the client/social worker relationship, and to analyse and address the social, economic and political forces that systematically effect service users lives (Healy, 2000). But this approach remains problematic in that critical social work continues to marginalize service users by applying dualisms such as 'client/social worker' that uphold traditionally contrasting distinctions between those with power and those without, leaving those relationships unchallenged. Consequently, Healy (2000) argues that 'the dualistic construction of the structural and local spheres leads logically to the conclusion that the local practices of social work are limited if not counter-

productive for radical social change' (p.5). This has compelled some social work theorists to take a postmodern turn in order to critique and seek to resolve some of these dilemmas.

A particularly important contribution that postmodern theory has offered this study, has been the method of deconstruction from which to examine the power inherent in dominant discourses that commonly represents those with power, whilst excluding and thus silencing, the experiences of the oppressed or marginalized (Foucault, 1981, 1991). Hence, Foucault (1981), argues that knowledge is defined through power relations and therefore believes that there can be no such thing as objective knowledge or 'truth claims'. This suggests that researchers must be cognisant of the various discourses that operate within research and other places where marginalized 'knowledge' exists, whilst at the same time consider the effect that dominant discourses have on marginalized groups of people (Healy, 2000). Reflecting these views, this research has been carried out within a methodological framework that acknowledges the power of dominant discourses, the tools in which to deconstruct these discourses, and the space in which to hear and represent marginalized voices.

The Foucauldian concept of 'resistance' (Foucault, 1991), has also been a relevant concept in the context of this research as it has enabled me to understand and explain the ways in which the young mothers in this study have attempted to challenge dominant discourses about teenage pregnancy and young motherhood. This has enabled me to engage in the practice of 'decentering' the subject, a process that identifies the ways in which subjects are socially constructed within discourse (Ashe et al, 1999), whilst also addressing the issue of agency, that being, the social and

economic forces in society that constitute identity (Leonard, 1997). Pease (1999) suggest that 'resistances are expressions of contradictions resulting from the exercise of power' and that through acknowledging agency and engaging in the practice of decentering, subjects can resist the dominant discourse. This can be achieved through developing new discourses, discovering alternative discourses, or by 'working on the contradictions between old and new discourses' (p.106). I have therefore engaged in the practice of decentering as a way in which to examine how the social locations of gender, class, age, and race have shaped the experiences and views of the young mothers who participated in this research.

Decentering can also provide a tool for avoiding the privileging one world view over another by including and valuing those perspectives that have been ignored or overlooked through a universal understanding of experience. One way in which I believe this can be achieved, is through engaging with a 'politics of difference' that works toward developing theory and practice that recognises and reflects the diversity and difference within multicultural societies. This corresponds with Cree, (2000) who argues

'Today's society is envisaged as a pluralistic, individualistic one, a 'multiplicity of voices'. There is a contingency about our being: everything is fluid and changing. We inhabit a host of different identities of class, 'race', ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, and we may choose which identity we will forefront in different situation' (p.20).

Therefore, in recognising how identities are constructed by those with power and how they ignore the other identities that the client owns, social work can take part in a 'politics of difference' that recognises not only differences between, but within people as well. Yet, it is also important to recognise that decentering can result in

denying a subject's agency which, in my mind, negates the possibility that young mothers can make decisions that may be influenced by their culture, but that nevertheless demonstrate agency within their role as a young mother. Heckman (1990) has highlighted the question of agency within postmodern theory through posing the following question:

‘why is it that just at the moment when so many of us who have been silenced demand the right to name ourselves, to act as subjects rather than objects of history, the concept of subjecthood becomes problematic?’ (p.163).

This issue has been addressed by postmodern feminist theorists who argue that agency does exist through being seen as ‘discursively produced in the social interactions between culturally produced, contradictory subjects’ (Weedon, 1997:176) and through enabling a process of choosing to either accept, resist, modify or fragment gendered identities (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002).

Perhaps the most important methodological issue that I have had to consider in regard to the usefulness of postmodern theory to feminist and social work research has been the process of self-reflexivity. Rossiter (2000) argues that this is because the link between postmodernism and feminism ‘creates a demand in social work for deep self-reflexivity about the problem of power that postmodernism on its own does not adequately address. Here, the challenge for social work is how this self-reflection can produce ‘political direction as opposed to an inevitable entrapment in complicity’ (p.33). This argument reflects the historical failure of social work to address issues about power, particularly in terms of using its own power to construct social problems. In response to this, postmodernism feminism demands that social workers are aware of how their social location influences their

practice and through recognising that social issues exist and are experienced differently on number of different levels (Fawcett and Featherstone, 1995, Rossiter, 2000). Consequently, this research has taken on some of the valuable propositions put forward by political movements such as feminism and armed them with the postmodern tools. This has enabled me to engage in social work research that values the working toward critiquing the status quo and creating social change (Leonard, 1997). I have also recognised that using postmodern tools does not necessarily mean entirely giving up on the solution focused end results that feminist and action research has depended on (Yeatman, 1994). Hence, this research will draw on a combination of postmodern and feminist positions that will challenge oppressive social arrangements and that also acknowledges that agency can exist even within oppressive situations. Hence, a key aim of this framework is to engage in a postmodern project that will 'allow for both the different and the similar perspectives of researchers-practitioners and teenage mothers to "jam" together' (Healy, 1995:287).

Research Strategy

The primary source of data for this study was gathered through participant observation and in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 15 young mothers who attended Stepping Stones, and 5 young mothers whose children attending the West Pilton Childcare Centre. My fieldwork started with a process of engaging in ethnographic research at Stepping Stones, which lasted for approximately 15 months.

The main purpose of engaging in participant observation as a research method was to

help me to become clearer about the questions I would develop within my interview schedule. I also anticipated that engaging in this process would result in developing trusting and comfortable relationships with the young mothers as I would be interviewing the mothers on what would at times include quite intimate issues. For the six months prior to engaging in interviews, I attended the project twice a week as a participant observer within a group aimed at new project users, and a group aimed at young mothers who had been users of the project for more than six months. I also observed any meetings that the young mothers were involved in regarding the project generally. Once I was involved in the interview process I limited my participant observation to once a week since, by that time, the new members has moved on to the group aimed at young mothers who had already been through the introductory group. My rationale for using Stepping Stones as the site for participant observation was in part due to my familiarity with the project due to my past employment with young women in a nearby youth and children's project, in addition to my prior involvement as a member of on the Stepping Stones management committee. This decision was confirmed through consulting service providers in Greater Pilton who felt that the majority of young women attending young mothers groups out with Stepping Stones, were most likely to be attending Stepping Stones as well.

In addition to engaging in participant observation, I interviewed 20 young mothers. 15 of the young mothers attended Stepping Stones and 5 young mothers' children attended the West Pilton Childcare Centre, a statutory social work agency aimed at providing support to very young children and their parents. The purpose of interviewing women from both organisations was to ensure that I represented as large

a cross-section of young mothers in the community as possible, since one of the aims of this study was to demonstrate their diversity of experience and need. The beginning stages of this process included deep consideration of the age of the young mothers that I would interview for this study. I chose to interview young mothers who were between the ages of 16 and 25 who had become pregnant under the age of twenty. This decision was based on early questions I had about the effectiveness of social exclusion programmes aimed at getting young people and lone mothers into education and training programmes, suggesting that I would need to interview young women who were sixteen and thus eligible to partake in these initiatives. I also wanted to interview young mothers who were accessing community based services that were either aimed at young mothers in particular or that focused on issues related to their mothering more generally. Yet, early discussions with my supervisors, social workers, community midwives, health visitors and community education workers suggested accessing young mothers under sixteen would be extremely difficult as they rarely, if ever, attended pre or post-natal services. I chose the twenty as the uppermost age limit for becoming a young mother as it included the full age range of a teenage pregnancy.

I also interviewed a cross section of 15 community-based professionals working in agencies and organisations that provided services to parents in Greater Pilton in order to gain information about the community in which the young mothers lived and to substantiate the young mothers' experiences of service provision in the community.

Access

i. Stepping Stones

The process of gaining access to engaging in participant observation and requesting interviews from the young mothers who attended Stepping Stones involved three stages. This included:

- Meeting with the co-ordinator of the project;
- Meeting with the management committee; and,
- Meeting with the mothers.

This process began with preparing a research proposal that all parties would be able to read before I met with them to discuss the proposal and to meet with them directly in order to answer questions or concerns that may have arisen. As the co-ordinator of the project had a community education background and the management committee were comprised of social workers, community health workers and community education workers, most members had a basic understanding of the issues attached to social inclusion and active citizenship strategies. This generated a strong level of interest and support in carrying out this research with Stepping Stones. Although the parents on the management committee were not as familiar with the terms ‘social inclusion’ and ‘active citizenship’, I did my best to explain these issues and did not leave until they felt that they had a satisfactory understanding of the research.

After being granted access to the project by both the co-ordinator and the management committee, I prepared myself to follow up this request with the young mothers. Stepping Stones has a weekly parents’ meeting where the parents discuss programming, activities, and future endeavours such as the summer residential. I was invited to a meeting to explain my research and to ask the mothers how they

would feel about having me attend the project as a participant observer two or three times a week. I also explained that I would be requesting interviews and that these interviews would require that I ask them to share personal experiences. I discussed key issues with them about the conduct of the research, including the question of anonymity. Again, my research was met with interest and openness and the young mothers said that they were happy to participate.

I set up interviews with young mothers attending Stepping Stones in two ways. First, through attending the project as a participant observer, I was able to ask the women directly if they would consider doing an interview with me. I was therefore able to obtain 13 interviews in this way. I obtained the 2 other interviews through the project co-ordinator who was in close contact with one young mother who attended a different part of the project that was based in Muirhouse as well as the name of a young mother who used to attend the project but who had moved on to full-time employment.

ii. West Pilton Children's Centre

In order to gain access to interviews with young mothers attending the WPCC, I had to first receive permission from the Research Section of the local authority Social Work Department. This took approximately four months as my request had to go through a number of formal stages. This included submitting my research proposal to both the manager of the WPCC, which was followed by a meeting with her to discuss and answer any questions, or concern she may have had. Once I was granted permission to access young mothers through the agency by the manager of the WPCC, I sent my research proposal to the local authority Social Work Department.

At that stage my research proposal went through a process of being considered for acceptance by the head of the Research Department. This included meeting with the manager of the WPCC to confirm her granting of permission, a synopsis prepared by the research coordinator at the Social Work Department, and a formal acceptance of the proposal by the Department's head of research. Once I received a formal letter from the Social Work Department, there was still the matter of meeting young mothers who were to be representative of the research sample. The process of arranging interviews with young mothers linked to the WPCC was quite difficult as there was not a designated daily time in which the mothers were at the project, and not all the young mothers were there at the same time. Another reason for the difficulties in accessing young mothers to interview was due to the chaotic nature of their lives making them difficult to get in touch with. However, through the support of the staff at the WPCC, all 5 of the young mothers were eventually contacted. Once they made the initial phone call to a young mother and received permission for me to contact them myself, it was in my hands to arrange a time and place for the interview.

The time and place of all the interviews were determined by the young mothers themselves in order to present them with the opportunity to consider any personal issues that may have resulted in difficulties related to their participating in the interview process. I knew from experience that there was likely to be diverse views amongst the young mothers regarding where they would want to be interviewed as well as the potential for them to forget or have something more urgent to do than attend an interview. As a result I ensured that the women had the choice of being

interviewed in a private room at the project or in their own home in order to increase the potential of their attendance at the interview and more importantly, to ensure that the interview took place in a safe and comfortable environment. As a result I interviewed 14 young mothers in their own homes, two at the WPCC and four at Stepping Stones. Finally, there were times when I went to meet up with a young mother only to find that she had forgotten or that something else had come up for her. I am pleased to report that the young mothers were very insistent about rearranging another interview and, that although I often made several trips to see the same young mother, I eventually succeeded in obtaining an interview with all those who had agreed to take part in the study.

Consent

Initially, I had to gain the verbal consent of the young mothers at Stepping Stones in order to attend their groups and meetings as a participant observer. I asked for their consent at the same time as I met with them to explain my research. I explained to them that this would entail being privy to personal discussions that they had within the groups and meetings and that I may take notes and write about what occurred in the group. I also explained that names would not be mentioned and that I would not share this information with anyone other than my research supervisors. I told the young women that if at any time anyone felt uncomfortable about my presence at a group or meeting to please let me or a member of staff know during the break, or if necessary at any other time of discomfort, and that I would leave the group or meeting at that time. All the participants were also asked to give their written consent before participating in an interview. The consent form outlined the basis of

the study and a confidentiality agreement (see appendix 1). In addition, the consent form also included a contact telephone number in the event that a participant would like to get in touch with me following an interview.

Data Collection

i. Outline of Interview Informants

My sample group consisted of 20 young mothers living in Greater Pilton. The age of the young mothers at the time of the interview ranged from 15 to 22 years with the birth of their first child occurring between the ages of 15 and 20 years. Thirteen of the young mothers were in what they perceived to be a committed relationship at the time they became pregnant and ten of these young women continued to be in a relationship with the father of their child or children. Of the 10 that were still in a relationship with their child's father, seven were married. At the time they became pregnant, six of the young mothers were in their fourth or fifth year of secondary school, one was attending college and six were in paid employment. Only two of the women I interviewed were unemployed or not in education at the time they became pregnant.

Fifteen of the young mothers I interviewed regularly attended Stepping Stones, and five had children who attended the WPCC. The young mothers who attended Stepping Stones did so on a voluntary basis. There was a 16th young mother who had agreed to attend the project as part of a Supervision Requirement, a statutory disposal of a children's hearing where it is found that a child needs 'protection, guidance, treatment or control' ((The Children) of Scotland Act, 1995, s.52(3)).

However, her interview was accessed through her association with the West Pilton Children's Centre. The majority of the mothers who attend the West Pilton Children's Centre have been referred there through the local authority Social Work Department for a number of different reasons that have brought their child's well being to the concern of a social worker. There are very few women that voluntarily ask to have their child referred to the centre however, one of the young mothers I interviewed had voluntarily put their children in the centre.

ii. Participant Observation

Prior to requesting interviews with the young mothers, I attended groups and meetings at Stepping Stones twice a week for approximately 15 months as a participant observer. My decision to engage in participant observation has been influenced by feminist ethnographers who emphasis the need to attend to the relationship between the observed, the observer and the production of knowledge (Skeggs, 1994, Skeggs, 1997). In addition, feminist ethnographers also argue for the need to relinquish the role of the 'objective expert' in order to allow for the voice of the observed to shape the narrative; to allow for the possibility of a multiplicity of meanings being given to the observation; and to recognise power relations that exist between the observer and the observed (Skeggs, 1994). As such, my main aim as a participant observer was to use my observations to assist in the development of research questions about issues I had not previously considered, and to gain a better understanding of the day-to-day concerns and activities of the young mothers attending the project. I also hoped that through attending the project on a regular basis the young women and I would get to know each other better and thus develop a

trusting relationship between myself and the participants. It was my hope that in achieving these aims, the young mothers would feel increasingly comfortable in my presence at the project and during the interviews.

Contrary to most literature on ethnography that assumes that the researcher will be using the information they receive through this as their primary source of data (Robson, 1993), I was using participant observation as a secondary rather than a primary tool of which one of the aims was to enrich and substantiate the interviews. This enabled me to be more flexible in my role as participant observer resulting in the realisation that my research role shifted and changed throughout my relationship with the young women at Stepping Stones. As such, during the first six months of engaging in ethnographic research, I kept a diary of the dates, times, settings and events in which I was a participant observer. With both the permission of Stepping Stones and the young mothers, I also kept flipcharts that were developed by me and the young mothers who took part in a group which explored the participants' experiences of becoming pregnant and a young mother. As the months passed however, I found that the need to write every detail about my meetings with the young mothers was unnecessary because the main themes and issues regarding their everyday experiences came up over and over again. Consequently, my observations and notes became focused on 'new' data that were written up as issues that I felt I would need to pay more attention to or as questions to be asked in the interviews.

I discovered that as I became more familiar with the young mothers and the issues that impacted on their daily lives, I was able to shift my role from one as purely an observer to one in which I was both observing and participating, to at times,

presenting as mainly a participant. My role continued to shift and change depending on the context of the group or meeting I was attending, my knowledge and familiarity with the young women and the issues they were discussing, and my own view about what role 'felt' right at any given moment. This experience corresponds with Hall (2001) who argues that 'ethnographic enquiry is not usefully reduced to either observation or participation alone. It is the combination of and movement between these two positions, which enables the ethnographer to develop a richly informed but critical understanding' (p.51). Consequently, I have come to believe that participant observation is a research tool that should be viewed as existing along a continuum in order that the one can allow for flexibility and appropriateness within the research role.

iii. Interviews

For the in-depth interviews, I developed a semi-structured interview schedule (appendix 2) to ensure that the same themes were addressed with all the participants yet flexible enough to allow for the emergence of other issues that I may not have anticipated. This corresponds with Marshall (1994) who found that relying on semi-structured interviews enabled the participants in her study to address issues that she had not originally considered. As a result, the topic list I developed for the interview was based on knowledge I gained from reading research on teenage pregnancy and young motherhood, documents on social inclusion and active citizenship, and through engaging in my role as a participant observer, as well as from my past experience as a community based social worker. I also ensured that I allowed for extra interview time in the event that the participants brought up issues than I had not

originally considered. The length of the majority of the interviews was approximately one hour and fifteen minutes to one and a half hours. There were however, two interviews that took approximately two hours and one interview that took approximately half an hour. The shorter interview occurred as a result of the young woman becoming quite emotionally distressed about other personal issues in her life that were going on for her at that time. As a result, I felt it best to stop the interview and help her to identify family or professional supports that she could contact in relations to her immediate circumstances.

The interviews focused on a number of themes including: experiences of finding out and decision making processes regarding their pregnancy; personal experience of young motherhood; perceptions about young motherhood including their own, the community's, service providers, and society in general; and participation in the community. However, as already mentioned, the flexible nature of engaging in a semi-structured interview allowed for the emergence of issues enabled the participants to focus more in-depth on those aspects of the interview that held the most relevance to their experiences.

iv. Documentary Research

The main aim of researching government documents for this research has been twofold. The first has been to develop an understanding of how the current political and social context in which teenage pregnancy and young motherhood is currently viewed by New Labour's Social Exclusion Unit in Westminster and by the New Labour government within the Scotland's Scottish Executive. The second has been

to examine strategic documents on sexual health, education and employment strategies in order to consider the ways in which the government's views about teenager pregnancy and young motherhood have influenced social welfare programmes aimed at pregnant teenagers and young and lone mothers.

Platt (1981) argues that,

‘The documentary researcher is often using the document as a source of information on that to which it refers - in effect as a surrogate researcher; it is vital then, to know how far its account can be relied upon. This is a matter of how the document is used rather than of what it is in its self...’ (p.41).

I have also considered Prior's (2003) arguments, which assert that documents are an integral part of the research process because they are influential in transmitting ideas. As such, I have taken into consideration a number of key points. These points suggest that:

- Documents are produced in social settings and are always to be regarded as collective (social) products.
- Determining how documents are consumed and used in organized settings – that is, how they function – should form part of any social scientific research project.
- In approaching documents as a field for research we should forever keep in mind the dynamic in the relationships between production, consumption, and content (Prior, 2003:26).

As a result, readings of documents have not been analysed in isolation, but rather as providing one view, albeit it a powerful one, of the way in which teenage pregnancy and young motherhood has been portrayed and addressed under the New Labour government.

Method of Analysis

i. Analysis of Interviews

Transcribed interviews were input into NUDIST and then printed out in order to develop both general and specific themes regarding the young mother's experiences. At this stage I began using NUDIST mainly as a way in which to code and store my data. This was achieved through a process of breaking down my data into a number of broad themes. My interview schedule had already ensured that certain themes would be addressed by the young mothers including the overall experience of finding out about a pregnancy, experiences of young motherhood, experiences with social work, community work and health care professionals and their own involvement in the community. Once these broader themes were coded, I began to develop a number of index tree roots. For example, one tree root was called 'social exclusion'. Branching from that, were a number of different node categories, or 'root children' that were related to social exclusion such as 'exclusion from services' or 'exclusion from education'. Another tree root was named 'reasons for becoming a young mother'. Node categories were identified through reading and re-reading the interviews in search of narratives that were in any way related to the tree root. For examples, through examining the interviews for 'reasons for becoming a young mother' I found that there were numerous narratives illustrating factors influencing this decision, for example, the desire to 'have children at a young age'. However, through engaging in several readings of the interviews, I also discovered that what a young mother said about this decision at one point in an interview only illustrated part of her story. For example, in the same interview I may have also found that although she wanted her children while she was young, she may have not actively

planned to have a baby at this time in her life; however, through a deeper analysis of the interview, I may have also found that she had a strong belief against abortion, demonstrating how this belief was yet another determining factor in her decision to become a young mother. Consequently, this resulted in creating another node under the tree root 'reasons for becoming a mother' entitled 'views about abortion'.

Corresponding to Richard's and Richard's (1994) experience of using NUDIST, the chief benefit of NUDIST to this research was its alleviation of cutting and pasting and retrieval of field notes and interviews. However, once the coding of the data was accomplished, use of NUDIST was minimal. This was due to my constant consideration of the various contexts in which the young mothers' narratives could be used to exemplify, illustrate and challenge issues relating to teenage pregnancy, young motherhood, social exclusion and citizenship. I consistently found that whilst I was thinking, writing or theorising about a particular issue, excerpts from interviews would 'jump' into my head, highlighting, validating or contradicting research and government documentation. Consequently, I constantly referred to the interviews and to excerpts from interviews that although originally used to exemplify a particular issue, found that it would be more useful to demonstrate something altogether different. Equally, my knowledge of the interview material allowed me to go directly to a location in a particular interview in the knowledge that what I would find there would demonstrate the point that I was discussing at that time illustrating the close relationship I had with my data. Finally, although NUDIST helped me to code, sort and store data, through compartmentalising issues and themes into nodes, it treated the young mothers' experiences as distinct pieces of a puzzle. As with most

puzzles, I found that the only time the young women were viewed by NUDIST in their entirety was at the point of inputting the interview into the programme and before I began the process of breaking down their experiences into themes. Therefore, in order to connect a woman's individual and various experiences to other aspects of her life in addition to the experiences of the women more generally, I found the need to constantly engage in a re-reading of the interviews in the context of what chapter or theme I was considering at any particular time.

It was only through engaging in a process of re-reading and reflexivity that I was truly able to analyse the interviews. As such, I used both of these analytic tools in deciding which material I was going to use from the interviews to be analyzed, and in my attempt to develop an analysis that highlighted the individual and particular as well as to understand what issues could be viewed as shared or as representing the culture of the group being studied. It is important to echo however, Holland and Ramazanoglu's (1995) assertion that,

‘...interpretation is a political, contested and unstable process between the lives of the researchers and those of the researched. Interpretation needs somehow to unite a passion for ‘truth’ with explicit rules of research method that can make some conclusions stronger than others’ (p.127).

Although I felt this was a particularly important issue to consider throughout the process of analysis, I also found this to be the case in deciding which material I was going to filter in or out from the interviews that were to be analysed and interpreted. As previously stated, my experience of the NUDIST was that it tended to fragment and perhaps even de-contextualise excerpts from the young mothers' interview transcriptions. Therefore, my choices about what excerpts I would use from the

interviews in order to highlight particular issues and themes were made by re-contextualising the thematic interview excerpts. For example, if I was looking for stories within the interviews that demonstrated social exclusion from health services and found an excerpt where a young woman made a statement about this issue, I would go back to the original transcription in order to find out the context in which this statement was made. This process allowed me to either confirm or refute the use of excerpts or 'stories' to substantiate my observations and theories. Moreover, engaging in this process also enabled me to see more clearly when contradictory or unexpected statements were made, and the need to reflect this within subsections under the relevant theme. Finally, there were a number of issues that were raised in the interviews that were incredibly interesting to me but not directly related to the subjects within this thesis. Hence, as much as I attempted to find a space to discuss these stories within my thesis, I sometimes found myself straying from the topics and themes relevant to this research study. Hence, another way of filtering out material was by asking myself or through having it pointed out to me, that the issues I was attempting to address did not add or highlight the main themes and issues of this particular study.

ii. Analysis of Participant Observation

Participant observation notes were recorded and input in NUDIST in the same format as the interviews. Consequently, these notes were drawn on in order to further illustrate and substantiate data from the interviews. For example, the theme 'abortion' arose out of a participant observation with the young mothers. Whilst attending a young mothers' group as a participant observer, the issue of abortion

arose in response to a video the young women had been watching. Emerging from this discussion was a strong joint response against abortion. However, during the group's 10 minute break, one of the young mothers came up to me and told me that she had two abortions but that only two of the women in the group knew about it. I asked her why she felt the need to keep it a secret and she said that abortion was really looked down on by the other young mothers who attended Stepping Stones. This ultimately influenced my decision to add a question to the interview schedule that would draw out their views and values regarding this issue.

Participant observation notes were also analysed through engaging in several readings of my ethnographic data and through juxtaposing my observations with government documentation and theories about young women's sexuality, teenage pregnancy and young motherhood. In her research on young women, Skeggs (1994) noted that different theoretical readings at different times sensitised her to look for particular issues. Such was the case in this research in that, documents, policies or pieces of research I was reading at any given time, brought up different questions about the experiences of young women's sexuality, teenage pregnancy and young motherhood, suggesting the need for numerous re-readings and reflexivity. Consequently, similarly to my experience with analysing interviews, engaging in more than one reading of my ethnographic notes allowed me to discover that even though the context of what was being said by the young women occurred within a specific moment in time, the content of what was being discussed was relevant to several different issues. As a result, I ensured that my ethnographic notes about the

young mothers attitudes, views and actions also included a detailed account of the context in which it occurred.

iii. Analysis of Documents

Reflecting on Foucault's (1980) challenge to the ways in which particular statement appears rather than others, the analysis of documents required that I constantly question the credibility of statements made about teenage pregnancy and young motherhood and the way in which these statements differed from or supported statements made by the young mothers. The analysis of reports published by the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) and the Scottish Executive as well as on-line reports and announcements on the SEU's and Scottish Executive's websites were thus analysed by juxtaposing statements made within the documents alongside statements or stories told through the interviews with young mothers. Hence, corresponding with Prior (2003), the main aim of this endeavour was to analyse documents for the ways in which they corresponded and/or conflicted with views on teenage pregnancy and social exclusion, and to gain insights into the social and political context in which these issues were being addressed.

Ethical Considerations

i. Confidentiality

Although I was engaging in academic and not practitioner-based research, as a social work trained professional I did feel that it was my responsibility to follow section 1.07(e) of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics (1996) which highlights the social workers responsibility to discuss both the nature and limits of

the right to confidentiality. In the context of research, this meant that prior to starting each interview I told the informants that the only people I would be sharing the contents of this interview prior to writing my thesis would be with my supervisors and that all names in the thesis would be changed.

ii. Emotional Safety

The British Sociological Association's Statement of Ethical Practice (1999) states that its members should be aware that the research process may be a disturbing one for participants and thus, should 'attempt to minimise disturbance to those participating in research'. In addition, the National Association of Social Work code of ethics (1996) section 5.02(j) addresses the responsibility on the part of the researcher to 'protect participants from unwanted physical or mental distress, harm, danger, or deprivation'. In connection to the interview process, Goodman (2001) argues that

'...in depth interviews in social work research present unique human subjects issues. The intimate nature of the interview format means that sensitive material and, consequently, strong emotional responses may erupt, presenting special dilemmas for social research practitioners' (Goodman, 2001:310).

This corresponds with Birch and Miller (2000) who also attend to the potential of blurring the boundaries between conducting sensitive feminist research, and engaging in counselling. These issues are particularly relevant within the context of this research in that there existed the potential for the young mothers to disclose personal information that may result in feelings of vulnerability just as for me there was the potential to want to stray into my 'other' role as a trained social worker. As a result, I had to be very clear about the fact that although I was a trained social worker, I was

unable to be the one who provided support in the way of counselling, once the interview. Consequently, I made sure that I was able to direct them to or connect them with an appropriate and local service. This corresponds with Dominelli (2000) in her discussion of the necessity for researchers to make provisions available for addressing the potential vulnerabilities that can arise when interviewing young women. This is not to suggest that when strong emotions arose during the interview session that I did not offer any support. Rather, prior to the interview, I prepared myself for the potential for strong emotions to surface, and as such, felt that it would be important for me to acknowledge the informant's feelings and to make sure that she felt able to continue, and to debrief with her after the interview (Hubbard, et al, 2001). Finally, in addition to providing participants with information about different sources of community based supports, I also requested that the participants had either a worker at Stepping Stones or the WPCC or a friend they could call or speak to in the event that they were feeling in need of some support following the interview.

iii. Power

Through my own experience of being a social worker and through hearing the way in which young women negatively viewed or experienced social workers, I had concerns that the young mothers would be wary of sharing their personal stories with me. This concern is supported by Miller and Glassner (1997) who suggest:

‘Social distances that include distance in relative power can result in suspicion and lack of trust, both of which the researcher must actively seek to overcome. Rapport building is a key to this process. Establishing trust and familiarity, showing genuine interest, assuring confidentiality and not being judgmental are some important elements of building rapport’ (p.106).

However, I found that as I engaged in a process of building rapport with the young mothers, it took very little time for them to share incredibly intimate and difficult experiences with me in both my capacity as a participant observer and as an interviewer. As I have mentioned in earlier sections, it was important to me that I maintain an awareness of the amount of power I held as a researcher and the way in which this power was experienced by the participants of this study. This process has made me very much aware that the young mothers' perception of my age, class, and authority were not necessarily picked on. As a result, the participants may not have picked up on all my multiple identities, or at least the one's that would have made them feel threatened by my social positioning. At the same time, my multiple identities as a local community worker, social worker, pregnant, Canadian woman may have provided me with more power than I originally considered. This was as a result of the power that the young mothers gave to me, rather than power that I consciously exerted over them.

There are different kinds of explanations for why the process of obtaining the trust of the young mothers was much less difficult than I had previously imagined within the context of this research. First, rapport may have already been developed prior to meeting and the way that I was introduced to the women both by myself and the staff at Stepping Stones and the West Pilton Children's Centre, was as someone who cared deeply about providing an understanding of young motherhood from the perspective of the young mothers themselves. This may have been because the young mothers were aware of my connection to Stepping Stones and related agencies through my previous employment at another local project. This provided me with a certain

amount of 'respect' as I had a reputation of caring about and supporting young women in the community, some of whom were currently attending Stepping Stones and the WPCC. As a result, the young mothers that did not know me, were assured that I was 'sound' by both service users and staff. I was also supported by both the young mothers who already knew me, and the staff at Stepping Stones, in making the transition from 'friendly stranger' (Hall, 2001) to someone that the young mothers trusted to represent and empathise with their stories. Hence, just as in Finch's (1989) study on clergymen's wives, it may have been that the young mothers were just happy to have someone interested in hearing about their lives and experiences from their own point of view.

In an early conversation with the young mothers about social work, I told them that although I had never worked for a statutory agency, I did have a social work qualification. This information was met with absolute disbelief in that the type of community work I had previously been engaged in did not match up to their idea of what a social worker was. In some ways, this resulted in the young women assigning me even more status in that they believed I was 'different' and therefore 'better' than what they had experienced or imagined all social workers were like. On reflection, part of this may also have been down to the fact that I am Canadian and therefore difficult to place in terms of class. My apparent 'classlessness' may have helped to break down barriers that could have potentially effected the young mothers perception of me. However, perhaps since I did not have an identifiably 'posh' accent, there did not appear to be any discomfort around sharing stories about 'being skint' or working 'under the table' whilst receiving benefit. Moreover, based on my

experience of having worked in a local youth and children's project, I was also aware that a number of the people living in this community either had a relation living in Canada or had been to Canada (most often Toronto) on holiday. This may have made my being Canadian simultaneously exotic and familiar, thereby making me more interesting than threatening.

My role as a participant observer may have played a particularly crucial part in how rapport between the young mothers and I developed, and how this changed throughout the course of my research. This is particularly significant in that it was important to me that I both acknowledge the inherent power whilst also attempting to make the power dynamic as balanced as possible. Moreover, similarly to Skeggs (1995), the balance of power shifted in relation to our similarities and differences. At the beginning stages of my role as a participant observer there were obvious differences in our social positionings. The mothers attending Stepping Stones were Scottish, young, working-class women whose level of education did not go much beyond their 4th year of high school. I was a Canadian, middle-class, university educated and social work trained woman in my early 30s. They were women who experienced pregnancy, birth and motherhood. I had to yet to conceive a child. At that time, I felt acutely aware of the power I believed I had in this relationship, yet, as time went on, I saw the young mothers assert their own power, particularly in instances where they were able to take on the role as 'expert' in regard to their experiences of pregnancy, birth and motherhood. This expert role continued even once after I told the young mothers that I was also going to become a mother, and throughout my pregnancy.

Regardless of how much power the young mothers may have experienced as participants in this research, I continued to be cognisant of the fact that as the researcher, I was still held considerable more power in that I was there as an observer of their lives and that I would be using this information to both guide me in developing my interview schedule and in substantiating the interview data. Perhaps the most obvious way in which I attempted to shift power between myself and the young mothers was in my attempt to take their lead in deciding when I could become more of a participant than an observer, particularly when it came to obtaining information about their experiences. In the early days of my research my role was much more as an observer than as a participant. This was because although I knew some of the young mothers and all of the young mothers had agreed to my being there, the majority did not know me and I was concerned that they would feel guarded and weary about my presence and perhaps even disempowered – that is silenced to the point that they would feel the need to censor themselves. Although, the young mothers seemingly felt comfortable sharing their personal experiences with me from very early, their stories became increasingly personal as my relationship with them progressed. Hence, at the beginning stages of my role as a participant observer they focused mainly on stories of success and survival, whereas months later their stories became increasingly personal and included their sharing with me details of abuse in past relationships or about their decisions to have an abortion. Conversely, as the young women began to share more and more with me, the more comfortable I became in participating in their groups and conversations.

I slowly began to ask the young mothers to expand on or provide me with the background on the discussions they were having with each other. Thus, whereas I initially asked questions that I didn't think would be experienced as personally invasive such as questions about their children and their views/experiences of young motherhood, as time went on, I began to inquire into the more personal aspects of their lives. At the same time, the young mothers' also started asking me about my life and I felt that it was important that I answer their questions, again, in order to attempt to achieve a better balance of power in our relationship. Hence, it appears that an important factor resulting in the young mothers' sharing with me what I viewed to be the very intimate details of their lives, was as much about the time I spent as a participant observer at the project and their developing a sense of trust in me, as was my willingness to share details of my life. As such, the most significant shifts in how much the young mothers shared with me occurred once they learned more about me and in particular, once they found out that I was pregnant and going to be a mother. Finally, once the interviews began and I was clearly pregnant, the young mothers seemed to enjoy the fact that I would soon be joining the motherhood club and in most cases, provided me with ante and post-natal advice and made sure that *I* was physically comfortable throughout the duration of the interview. This experience has been both personally and methodologically interesting to me and one that will be discussed in greater detail in the following sections.

Reflexivity in the Research Process

I engaged in both 'weak' and 'strong' readings of reflexivity throughout the duration of this research. Wasserfall (1997) explains:

‘Very broadly, what may be called the “weak” reading of reflexivity is a continued self-awareness about the ongoing relationship between a researcher and informants, which is certainly epistemologically useful: the researcher becomes more aware of constructing knowledge and of the influences of her beliefs, backgrounds and feelings in the process of researching...The “strong” reading on the other hand, contains certain assumptions or the deconstruction of the authority of the author and/or of the power difference in the field. These assumptions gloss over difficult theoretical and political tensions in which ethnographic knowledge is produced and consumed’ (p.151)

I engaged in a ‘weak’ reading of reflexivity through ongoing discussions with my supervisor. This enabled me to maintain a continued self-awareness about my relationship with the participants of this research and the way that this influenced the way in which I interpreted the data.

I have also engaged in a ‘strong’ reading of reflexivity through maintaining a constant awareness of the power differences between the research participants and myself. Interestingly, it was the young mothers themselves who ensured that I continued this process through consistently pointing out both the similarities and differences existing between us. For example, during one group discussion the young mothers were talking about motherhood and their feelings in losing a child and one mother looked directly at me and said ‘You wouldn’t know Saara, because you don’t have a bairn’. Another time, in the context of an interview, a young mother was discussing her desire to have her children when she was young unlike me who ‘waited till I was in my 30’s’. This type of reflexivity was also maintained as a result of interviewing most of the women in their own homes. Although a majority of the women were very ‘house proud’ and often showed me what they had recently bought for their home or what decorative plans they had in mind as soon as they had

some money, some of the young mothers were living in particularly dismal living conditions. In one case, one of the young mothers who was living in a high-rise council flat, had been waiting for months to get her toilet fixed and locks put on the windows. I was made painfully aware of how much more economically and socially privileged I was than the young mothers I interviewed. Yet at the same time it was these very experiences that made me amazed at how these young women cared for their children under such adverse circumstances. Hence, I maintained a consistent appreciation of my position as a middle-class, educated, social work researcher who was going to be having a child in the context of a middle-class, two-parent household. Finally, I also had to ensure that my desire to develop a competing discourse about young motherhood did not blind me to some of the difficult aspects of becoming and being a young mother and consequently, how this might influence the ways in which I viewed and interpreted the lives of the women I interviewed for this research.

A key area in which reflexivity influenced my study was my negotiation of the researcher/practitioner boundary. When I first began attending Stepping Stones, the workers who were facilitating the various groups often deferred to me in their view of me as a more 'experienced' professional in addition to viewing me as an 'extra set of hands'. This resulted in some staff leaving me to facilitate both activities and group discussions on sensitive topics on my own whilst the worker went off to finish off paper work or make telephone calls. In one instance this occurred in the context of a group of young mothers watching a video that focused on the experiences of pregnant teenagers. Following the video, the young mothers began discussing the

young women presented and the emotive issues resulting from this. Although I was well able to facilitate this discussion, I did not want my role as a participant observer to become blurred with the roles taken on by the staff at the project. I therefore initiated a discussion with the staff member about this the next time I saw her. Although she apologized and said she would make certain that this would not happen again, a similar event occurred the following week. Consequently, I decided to discuss this issue with the project coordinator and asked her to remind the staff that I was not there as an extra staff person, but simply as a participant observer.

The issue of being perceived as 'staff' was not only presented to me by the workers at the project, but by the young mothers as well. The interviews with the young mothers were completed at the end of June at which time the project's programme was also coming to a close for the summer vacation. I was also 8 months pregnant and about to take maternity leave. As such many of them asked me if I would be 'coming back to work' at the project after I had my baby. By 'work' they did not mean my research but rather, if I would continue to be involved in the groups. This demonstrated to me that they viewed my role at the project as more than just a 'researcher', but also as someone who had their best interests at heart much like the staff at Stepping Stones.

ii. Becoming a Mother: reflections on the researcher-participant relationship

My social positioning in relation to the young mothers shifted over time as a result of both their familiarity with me in addition to my increasingly obvious pregnancy. However, the reality of being pregnant and feelings about becoming a mother had a

very different impact on my research that I had anticipated. Even before I became pregnant I had a particular interest in the way in which the young mothers might respond to me as my body grew and changed. Yet, what I was not prepared for was how being pregnant affected both the way in which I engaged with the young mothers and how the findings emerging from the research increased my passion for this issue on both a personal and political level. Similar to Bourne (1998), I also felt, at times, incredibly overwhelmed by the young mother's experiences and my own reactions to them as I was analysing my data. Hence, corresponding with Hubbard et al (2001), my personal experience of engaging in a process of research that has not been an 'emotion-free experience' (p.132). This has highlighted for me, both the role of emotion in research, and the recognition of the value in considering the impact that the researcher's emotions will have on all stages of the research process (Hubbard et al, 2001).

As my identity as a mother-to-be developed, so did my connection with the young mothers as women who shared something that I had previously taken for granted; that being, the feelings of love that a mother has for her child and the desire to give one's child the best possible chances in life, in addition to some of the more difficult experiences associated with pregnancy. It would not be until I engaged in my process of analysis that I was able to identify more strongly with some of the other trials and tribulations associated with childbirth and motherhood. I have also learnt that there are many different factors which influence what and how a mother views what it means to provide her child with 'the best possible chance in life' and that these views may change and shift over time. As a result, throughout the analysis of the

interviews, it is has important for me to continually reflect on the young mothers social and emotional positioning at that particular time and to situate their experiences in the context of their social, emotional and physical environments.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided the theoretical framework in which my research has been situated. This has included a discussion of the way in which both feminist and postmodern perspectives have influenced the way in which I conducted my research and analysed my findings. Both perspectives have also enabled me to consider the ethical issues that arise when interviewing marginalized groups of people whilst providing me with the necessary tools to address them. One key tool that has been particularly valuable to me has been to engage in reflexivity throughout all stages of my research. This has enabled me to continually reflect on my findings and my data analysis, and to consider how my own experience of pregnancy and motherhood impacted on the research process.

Chapter Four

The Research Participants

There were many young mothers who contributed to this research through allowing me to attend groups at Stepping Stones as a participant observer. However, there were twenty young mothers in particular who participated in this research through engaging in in-depth interviews that focused on their personal experiences of teenage pregnancy and young motherhood. These interviews have resulted in the numerous and varied stories that I have drawn on throughout the course of this research. What follows is, in alphabetical order, a brief portrayal of each of the young women who participated in the interview portion of this study in order to provide a space from where to acknowledge the informants' individual and unique voices, in addition to providing a point from which to refer back to throughout a reading of the thesis. All names have been changed in order to protect the identity of the interview informants.

Ainsley: Ainsley is 20 years old and has three children ranging in age from 5 years to 8 months old. All three children have the same father; however, neither Ainsley nor the children have had any contact with him since before the birth of the youngest child. Ainsley and her three children live with her parents in a three bedroom house. Ainsley's main activities include sitting on the Stepping Stones management committee and on the management committee of Muirhouse Under Two's, a community based project that provides services to parents who have children under the age of two years. She is at home with her children full time.

Anna: Anna is 19 years old and has two sons aged 3 years and 1 year. She lives with her husband who is the father of both her children in a council flat. Her activities include attending Stepping Stones, taking a locally offered computer course and being a stay-at-home mother.

Ally: Ally just turned 18 and had an 18-month-old daughter and was pregnant with her second child at the time of my research. She lives in a council flat with her partner who is also the father of her daughter and expectant child. Her main activities since leaving school have been to help her mother care for her youngest sister and another sister who has special needs and to care for her own daughter. She currently attends the groups at Stepping Stones and has future aspirations of going to college to become a nursery nurse.

Brenda: Brenda is a 21-year-old black¹² young mother who has three children ranging in age from 4 years to six months old. She lives in a council flat with her partner who is also the father of her three children. Brenda and her children use the services based at the West Pilton Children's Centre. Brenda is a stay-at-home mother.

Chloe: Chloe is 19 years old with two children, a three-year-old son and six month old daughter. She lives in a council flat with her husband who is also the father of both her children. Prior to becoming pregnant, Chloe had plans to go to Drama

¹² Both policy and practice within the UK use the term 'black' to represent the black, Asian and bi-racial population. This has not been entirely consistent with the way in which the women from minority ethnic backgrounds identify themselves. Consequently, in attempting to stay consistent with the language engaged in by social service and community projects, I will be using the term 'black' when discussing racism more generally and the racial term that the women use when discussing they're individual experiences.

College, but when she became pregnant; she put this idea behind her and become a stay-at-home mother. Chloe has aspirations of going back to college to do a business course. At the time of the interview she was a member of the Stepping Stones management committee and was working approximately five hours a week in paid employment.

Dionne: Dionne is 21 years old and has a 2-year-old son. She is a lone parent. Dionne left school at 16 to work in an office. Because she was working on a fixed term contract basis, she was not rehired after taking time off to have her son. She is currently working part-time in the evenings at which time her father takes care of her son. Dionne used to attend Stepping Stones quite frequently but finds that she no longer has the time to attend.

Donna: Donna is 19 years old and has a 3-year-old daughter. She currently lives in a council flat with her partner who is also the father of her child. Her daughter currently attends the WPCC.

Jenna: Jenna is 18 years old and has a two-year-old daughter and is pregnant with her second child. She lives in a council flat with her partner who is also the father of her daughter and expectant child. Jenna's main activities have included volunteering at a local community centre with young children, participating in groups at Stepping Stones, and being a stay-at-home mother.

Karen: Karen is a 23-year-old black young woman who has two daughters aged five and three, and is pregnant with her third. She lives with her husband, who is

also the father of her children in a council flat. Karen's main activities include being a stay-at-home mother and being the assistant chair of the Stepping Stones management committee.

Kat: Kat is 19 years old and has a 2-year-old son. At the time of the interview, Kat was living on her own because her partner was in prison. Prior to becoming pregnant, Kat was training to become a hairdresser but left the programme shortly after finding out she was pregnant. She has plans to eventually go back to college to take a course in computer programming. Currently she is at home full-time with her son and attends the groups at Stepping Stones.

Leanne: Leanne is 16 years old lone parent who has a 10-month-old son. She and her son live in a council flat. She has recently started coming to Stepping Stones.

Lisa: Laura is 17 years old and has a 2-month-old son. She lives with her husband, who is also the father of her child, in a council flat. Prior to her pregnancy, Lisa was not in any type of education or training programme and was unemployed. She is currently attending the groups at Stepping Stones.

Liz: Liz is 19 years old lone mother of a two-year-old son and pregnant with her second. Prior to becoming pregnant, Liz was working as dental assistant and continued to work until she was alerted to having a high-risk pregnancy. Her activities include being a member of the Stepping Stones management committee and attending other local services aimed at young or lone mothers.

Lorna: Lorna is 20 years old and has two-year-old daughter. She lives with her partner who is also the father of her daughter in a council flat. Her activities include attending groups at Stepping Stones and being at home with her daughter.

Nicky: Nicky is 22 years old and has a 5-year-old daughter. She lives with her husband in a housing that she rents through a housing association. She is a stay-at-home mother and is a member of the Stepping Stones management committee.

Raina: Raina is a 20-year-old Muslim young mother. She has a 3-year-old son who attends the West Pilton Children's Centre, and 1-year-old daughter. She lives with her husband in a council flat and is a stay-at-home mother.

Stella: Stella is 17 years old and has a two-year-old son. Her son attends the West Pilton Children's Centre. Stella lives in a council flat with her partner who is not the father of her son. Stella is currently in the process of considering a number of training options but is currently unemployed. She sometimes attends the groups on offer at Stepping Stones.

Trina: Trina is 17 years old and has a 13-month-old baby. She lives with her partner who is also the father of her child in a council flat. She is a stay-at-home mother.

Veronica: Veronica was 16 years of age at the time of the interview and had a one year old. Together they live in a one-bedroom council flat. Veronica is currently taking course through Second Chance to Learn at Stepping Stones. Veronica has aspirations to get married and have another baby in addition to one day becoming a journalist.

Vonnie: Vonnie is 23 years old and has her first child at the age of 17, but he died at the age of 3 months old from cot death. She has two other children aged 5 and 8 months old. Her 5 year old attends the West Pilton Children's Centre. She lives with her partner, who is also the father of all three children, in a council flat. Vonnie is currently working part-time in the evenings, and is at home during the day with her youngest child.

Chapter Five

Becoming a Young Mother

Introduction

As the review of literature has already demonstrated, young motherhood is not a neutral experience; rather it is replete with political meaning and highly dependent on structural factors including class and ethnicity. Hence, in order to understand the issues associated with young motherhood it is necessary to consider the social, economic and cultural context in which young women become pregnant and mothers. This chapter will explore the process of becoming a young mother: how the young women felt when they 'found out' they were pregnant, the amount of agency they had in regard to their pregnancy; the factors that influenced their decisions regarding the future of the pregnancy; and their thoughts about becoming a young mother.

'Finding Out' Stories

I began each interview by asking how the informants had become mothers. This included asking them about their experiences of finding out about their pregnancy and the decision making process with which they engaged regarding the outcome of their pregnancy. When I asked the question 'how did you feel when you first found out you were pregnant?' The majority of the women said they were 'shocked', albeit for different reasons. One important factor that determined how the news of a pregnancy was experienced was the type of relationship the young woman was in at the time. Four women displayed concern regarding their pregnancy as it had occurred within the context of an emotionally and/or physically abusive relationship. For Dionne, news of

her pregnancy came just after finally finding the strength to end the abusive relationship she had been in for two years. When asked about how she responded to finding out about her pregnancy, she stated:

‘Sorta shocked...my friend had just phoned as soon as I found out the answer, you know, from the test, my friend phoned and she was like, what is it? And I was like, ‘Oh, I’m pregnant’, and I started crying. I was that shocked so she says she would come stay the night...I was in such a state.’

Donna, who was also in a physically abusive relationship but did not have any plans to leave her partner, experienced a similar reaction. Darcy felt both shocked and fearful about the prospect of being pregnant and becoming a mother knowing that her child would be raised in the context of an unhealthy relationship.

For four of the other young women who experienced an unexpected pregnancy, their initial feelings of apprehension about the prospect of becoming a mother were lessened. This may have been due to their description of their relationships with their partners as loving and committed. The shock of pregnancy was also experienced as more manageable in situations where the young woman was not only in a supportive relationship, but was also confident that even if this relationship were to end she would be able to receive emotional support from parents, grandparents, or older siblings. This was the case for Chloe who never questioned the fact that she would receive support from both her partner and her mother:

‘...I knew I was in a stable relationship and I knew that things would be fine, and I knew if things didnae work out I’ve always got, my mum’s the best person in the world, I cannae ask for somebody to give me more support, so I knew that if anything did go wrong she would always be there for me...’

Hence, knowledge that there would be emotional support from a partner, in addition to

other family members, was yet another tangible way in which she was able to shift feelings of shock into feelings of acceptance.

The emotional support extended to the young mothers by family members was also influential in the evolution of feelings about the pregnancy. This support often resulted in shifting feelings of shock and fear into excitement. Such was the case for Veronica who when asked how she felt upon first finding out about her pregnancy replied 'shocked and scared'. Yet at the same time, she also stated that as soon as she told her dad and 'everyone came round to the idea', her feelings of shock and fear changed to 'excitement' and a feeling of 'being over the moon'. This was also Leanne's experience as she states:

'I think I was really shocked. I was upset; I think I was more concerned at what my parents were going to think more than anything else. I was scared of that, but once it all calmed down and everything, I had told them, the excitement started to build up.'

Both Veronica and Leanne became pregnant to men who subsequently chose to leave the relationship and any responsibility associated with raising the child. However, as these stories suggest, the support of family members is integral in reframing feelings of shock and fear into those of excitement and anticipation.

One young woman was shocked at becoming pregnant for very different reasons; she believed she could not get pregnant. Although Stella who had never actively tried to conceive, she was under the false impression that she would never be able to have children. As a result, when asked about her initial reaction to the news of her pregnancy, she replied,

'I'm gonnae be a mum, I can't believe it. I was kinda, when I was told I was like 'yes! There's nothing wrong with me, I've conceived a child!' To me that was kinda a big issue because I always wanted to

have kids at some point and from a very early age I was always worried that I would never be able to 'cos I was kinda, I'm the kinda person that would watch something on a programme about people not having perfect children or not being able to have kids but I was sorta like, 'yes, I've done it!' And then after I got past that stage I was like, 'shit (laughs), I've got to tell people now', but it all came together nicely in the end. But it was literally a shock. It was, 'I'm going to have such a big responsibility and I'm gonnae have little time, it needs me 24/7 and I don't know if I can do that.' But I managed it.'

However, sometimes the shock and excitement that was experienced within the context of a planned pregnancy, were followed by a sudden recognition of the impact this would have on their relationship. For Liz, finding out she was pregnant meant having to share this news with her boyfriend and then deal with the consequences:

'I actually went to the Brook¹⁴ and I was really nervous because I was a few days late with my period and I'm like clockwork, I was told, they basically asked me if I wanted, what would I do if I was and what would I do if I wasn't, and I said I would jump around the room eh and em, and if I wasnae I would probably be a bit upset if they turned around and says no you're not eh, but when I initially found out it was more shock, it was like, 'oh my god I am pregnant'. I didnae ken what to do, it was like, I was glad but- 'how am I going to tell L (boyfriend) about this?' and things like that eh.'

At first, Liz appeared to be more interested and excited by the idea of having a baby than maintaining her relationship with her partner. Yet, when I asked her how she thought her boyfriend would respond, Liz's manner shifted from excitement to one that was more sombre and stated that she knew her boyfriend was not interested in having a baby and that she would probably have to raise this child on her own.

Discussion

What these accounts demonstrate is that far from being unique to young mothers, the feelings young women express about becoming pregnant are similar to those of older

¹⁴ The Brook Advisory Centre is a national voluntary organisation in the UK that provides free and

women, echoing the earlier findings of Phoenix and Woollett (1991). Just as in is the case for women more generally, pregnancy is a highly individual and unique experience. At the same time, there were also some common threads that ran throughout the interviews. For some of the women, pregnancy was experienced as a shock, which related to particular factors such as the type of relationship the young woman was in and the reactions of family members. In addition, these experiences were influenced both by the myths that some of the women had about their fertility or their ability to carry a baby to term, as well as the difficulties associated with raising a baby on one's own. The 'finding out' stories also confirm that for some young women, pregnancy is a planned event that has enabled them to engage in a process of thinking about and working toward making the transition into motherhood. These young women have also demonstrated that even under adverse circumstances, such as becoming unexpectedly pregnant within the context of an abusive relationship, finding sources of support in the early stages of a pregnancy can have a positive impact on the ways in which they feel about a pregnancy. Moreover, emotional support was equally important to the young women's evolution of how she felt about her pregnancy and the potential of becoming a mother.

'Planned' and 'Unplanned' pregnancies

The stories that the young mothers shared with me about their experiences of finding out about their pregnancies inevitably led me to ask them whether or not their pregnancies had been planned. However, the answer to this question was rarely definitive implying that pregnancy amongst teenagers is a much more complex issue than current policy initiatives would suggest. The terms "planned" and "unplanned"

confidential sexual health advice to young people under the age of 25.

pregnancy proved to be increasingly unrepresentative categories in which to reflect the young women's view of their experiences. Rather, emerging from the interviews were a number of different circumstances in which the young women became pregnant, all of which are equally important in understanding the social and cultural contexts in which teenage pregnancy occurs.

Of the twenty young mothers who were interviewed for this study, there was only one young woman, Gina, who stated that she became pregnant as a result of her lacking sufficient knowledge of contraception and safer sex practices. Four of the other young mothers however, became pregnant as a result of failed contraception. For example, Claire's pregnancy occurred just after she decided to stop using the contraceptive pill due to its effect on her moods and before she switched to an alternative method, whereas Debbie became pregnant due to a split condom.

Of particular importance to this research however are the experiences of the four young mothers who, although clear in their minds that they did not want to become pregnant, did not engage in regular 'safer sex' practices. In these four instances, the young women felt that they had little power in their relationships rendering them silent when it came to expressing their desire to use contraception. Stella demonstrates how experiencing a sense of powerlessness can lead to engaging in 'unsafe' sex:

'... I'm not stupid and I know if you have unprotected sex you're gonnae fall pregnant. Em, we were sometimes using condoms and things like that but most of the time we couldn't be bothered. I wouldn't say he was planned but he wasn't sorta, he wasn't, basically I knew it was gonnae happen at some point, it was just a matter of when. But I wasn't doing it because I wanted to have a baby, I was pretty naive at the time as well and I just sorta went along with whatever he said.'

Stella's narrative indicates that she did not feel able to assert her wishes and instead, 'went along with whatever [her boyfriend] said', demonstrating her lack of power in that relationship. Yet, Stella also believed that at that time, her naiveté resulted in her *allowing* her partner to make most of the decisions regarding the use of birth control even though she felt clear about not wanting to become pregnant. It therefore also appears that Stella has taken on some of the responsibility for her inability to assert her sexual health needs and thus, taken away some of the responsibility from her partner for her pregnancy.

Donna and Dionne's 'decision' to go along with their partners' wishes not to use contraception was made in the context of what they defined as either a physically or emotionally abusive relationship. Accordingly, all sexual decision-making power was in the hands of their partners. Both Donna and Dionne shared the extreme difficulties they experienced in asserting themselves within their relationships, because their partners were regularly violent toward them. As a result, neither of these women had either the confidence or courage to assert their desire to use birth control. For Dionne, this was followed by pressure from her partner to keep the baby rather than consider other options such as abortion. As she explained, 'I was in two minds about whether or not to have a termination or to keep the baby...but he pushed me into keeping the baby'. This demonstrates that not only was Dionne's sexual health choices being determined by her partner, but so too were her maternal and long-term health choices as well.

Cultural and ethnic traditions also have an impact on decision-making in relation to pregnancy. Raina's arranged marriage carried with it expectations that she would quickly have a child. She had an arranged marriage at 16 years of age and had her first child at the age of 17. At the time of interview, she was aged 20 and had a second child. She would have had three but Raina had an abortion when she became pregnant a third time because she felt that she would 'have a breakdown' if she were to have any more children. However, to this day, both her husband and her family have no knowledge of Raina's abortion because, as Raina shared with me, having an abortion goes against both her husband's and her family's religious and cultural values. Although this particular example demonstrates that cultural expectations may lead to young motherhood, it is also another example of the way in which young women lack choices in relationships where they have no power over their bodies. Moreover, Raina's choice to have an abortion also indicates that even in situations of powerlessness, young women can engage in acts of resistance and assert personal agency.

In contrast, seven young women in this study, although knowledgeable about the consequences of not using contraception, either used birth control irregularly or not at all. Yet, rather than feeling nervous, the majority of these young women were 'secretly hoping' that their 'risky' behaviour would result in a pregnancy or were 'not bothered' about the prospect of becoming pregnant. This was the case for Liz, whose pregnancy occurred whilst using the birth control pill in the knowledge that its effectiveness was decreased as a result of using other medication. She states,

'I fell pregnant with her on the pill, I was warned because of the medication that I take for my heart condition that the pill might not work up to its full expectations so there was a chance I was going to get pregnant anyway, but when I found out I was over the moon...it was a hope...I thought it was brilliant.'

Moreover, Liz had never discussed the possibility of having children with her partner at the time but chose to take these risks in the hope that he would be in the relationship long term. However, regardless of what Liz's partner may have wanted, she has always maintained that 'it was a hope' that she would start a family at that time because she wanted to have her family while she was still young, regardless of whether or not she had a partner to support her in this endeavour. Nicola, on the other hand, had thought about and discussed with her partner the possibility of having a child. Although Nicola's partner expressed his concern about having a child due to the impact it would have on her ability to finish high school, Nicola still chose to stop taking the pill because she 'didn't feel 16', and in reality, felt 'a lot older than that'. She also felt that she 'could handle having a child so young'. The desire to have a baby coupled with the confidence she had in herself to take on the role of mothering successfully, ultimately influenced her decision to stop using contraception and 'let nature take its course'. It was this group of women who, in different ways, were unable to state whether or not their child was planned or unplanned.

Four women in this study actively engaged in a process of trying to become pregnant. Ally actively started trying to conceive as soon as she and her partner moved in together. At that time she was not involved in paid employment or an education programme however, she did feel a strong sense of responsibility toward caring for her siblings and niece. When I asked Ally why she had started trying for a baby at this particular time, it became apparent that her decision was influenced by what was happening in her peer group. A pregnancy was also planned by Lorna, who had been pregnant in the past, but who had experienced a miscarriage. This demonstrates how

the pain of losing a baby to a miscarriage developed into a strong desire to try to become pregnant again. Finally, two other women in the study who had planned their pregnancies did so within the context of what they viewed to be a stable relationship and as such, the time just felt 'right'.

Discussion

These findings are in contrast to public opinion and political discourses which assumes that teenage pregnancy is caused by irresponsible and uneducated sexual acts (Rowlingson and McKay, 2002). Rather, the experiences of the young women in my study indicate that teenage pregnancy occurs as a result of a variety of circumstances and within diverse contexts. Although there were a number of young mothers in this study who had both an unwanted and unplanned pregnancy, their pregnancies did not result from a lack of knowledge nor did they result from 'irresponsible' sexual practices. For at least some of the young women, the pregnancy occurred within the context of a what appeared to be an emotionally or physically abusive relationship that resulted in an inability to question both their own and their partner's role in making decisions about contraception. This corresponds with Holland et al's (1991) assertion that:

'Hidden male power complicates condom use and gives it contradictory social meanings that can work against using condoms as a consistent, rational response to sexual risk. Where young women adopt conventional feminine identities uncritically, their sexual safety is more likely to be at risk, since femininity requires both deference to male demands and needs, and also emotional investment in a relationship with a man' (p.54).

Hence, the context in which young women became pregnant is likely to be one in which traditional gender roles may dictate the process of contraceptive

decision-making. However, adopting a conventional feminine identity within a heterosexual relationship does not fully account for the impact that being in a violent relationship has on a young woman's sexual and emotional health. Young women in a violent relationship may be well aware of their risk of becoming pregnant, however, past experiences of physical and emotional abuse within the context of their relationships prevented them from insisting on the use of contraception. This indicates that both fear and powerlessness also played a role in some of the young mothers' inability to insist on engaging in protected sex. In turn, the terms 'planned' and 'unplanned' are limiting concepts when attempting to understand the decision making process that a young woman engages in regarding her sexual health needs in that it feeds into a discourse of choice which obscures the role of male power.

Walkerdine et al (2001) argue that although working-class girls are no more sexually active than middle-class girls, they make different choices when it comes to birth control and pregnancy. Middle-class girls may be more concerned about the consequences of not using contraceptives and, in the event of a pregnancy, are more likely to choose to have an abortion than working-class or poor young women. Yet the current sexual health programmes and policies (SEU 1999a) only appear to consider lack of sexual health information as the reason for unplanned or unwanted pregnancy, thus framing teenage pregnancy and young motherhood within a social pathology approach to social problems. This also fails to take account of the high proportion of positive reactions to 'unplanned' and planned teenage pregnancies and the fact that as many as half of under 16 year olds and two thirds of 16 –19 year olds who become pregnant carry the baby to term and plan to raise the child (Corlyon and McGuire, 1999). This provides a strong case here for re-evaluating current sex education

practices in both the school and the community. These issues will be discussed further in the next chapter.

'Decision Making' Stories

One issue which became increasingly clear as the findings of this study began to unfold, is that regardless of whether or not the pregnancy was initially 'unplanned', 'planned', desired or welcomed, all of the young women made a decision to become mothers. Although several overlapping themes developed from the interviews, they have not developed in isolation. Rather, the following themes should be understood as existing in relation to each other and, when taken together, contribute to the developing delight at becoming a young mother.

Being Ready

Experience of Caring

An important finding that has emerged out of this study is the status that the young women attach to motherhood. More specifically, it is striking to hear from the young women about the value attached to young motherhood which runs counter to popular discourse that stigmatises young mothers. Even before they are old enough to be physically able to become pregnant, girls in the Greater Pilton community, are likely to have had substantial experience of caring for small children, giving them growing confidence in being able to carry the mothering role. For example, as Ally asserts, 'I was used to it (being a mother) with Rebecca because I always had Rebecca with me'. This was also the case for Jenna who helped to raise the brother that was born two years before she had her own son. As a result of this experience, Jenna knew that she

could 'cope' with the responsibilities of motherhood and has relied on that experience to guide her today. Consequently, she strongly believes 'if you had a good experience and helped with your family you get on all right with everything'.

Growing up fast

A number of the young mothers identified that for them, having 'grown up fast' had a strong impact on their belief that they were not too young to have a baby. At 15 years of age, Veronica claims that she did not feel that she was too young to have a baby. Although her pregnancy was not planned and her relationship with her partner ended shortly after she found out she was pregnant, Veronica felt that due to circumstances in her life which made her 'grow up fast', she was mature enough to be a mother.

Reflecting this experience, Veronica states:

'I ken that sounds stupid but didnae think I was [too young]. Like when I was younger my grandpa died. I was really close to my grandpa and my grandpa died so I really had to grow up a lot faster than a lot of other people did because my grandpa had cancer. I was there for him every day of the week sort of thing. I would make his tea, I would make his breakfast, I'd go to school and as soon as it was finished I'd go over to granddad's house doing everything. So I, I didnae push my friends aside but family comes first sorta thing so, everything my granddad needed done I done for him. So I grew up fast that way so by the time I was 14 I was like about a 19 year old anyway so, and then I was more aware, I was always like mature for my age.'

Similarly, Lisa also identified a number of familial circumstances that resulted in her experiencing a sense of maturity and readiness to become a mother:

'Well, I've not had a pretty life. I started working when I was 11, 12, so I was supporting myself money-wise since I was 12 so I kinda grew up faster than I should have. And I kinda skipped; I wanted to work toward having a happy life. I wanted a career but I thought if I have my children first then I can have a career, and then I can provide for my family. Some people do it one way, I just did it the opposite way.'

Lisa's narrative indicates that her decision to have a baby at this time in her life was influenced by her desire 'to work toward having a happy life' which, due to personal circumstances was not something that she had experienced in the past. This indicates that although Lisa equates happiness with having both a family and a career, she chose to 'do it the opposite way' from what is generally expected from middle-class women, but what is more reflective of the lives of women in communities like Greater Pilton.

Being in a relationship

Finally, for nine of the young mothers, feeling 'ready' to have a baby, whether it was 'planned' or not, was also due in part to being in a stable relationship. The view that being in a stable relationship leads to a sense of being ready to have a baby was shared by Brenda who stated:

'Well I had been out with Alan when I was 13 and it only lasted about 3 or 4 months at that age, then I met him again and he completely changed and I just thought he was the right person eh, and we're still together eh, so I made the right choice that way, it's great.'

This example demonstrates that for some young women, engaging in the process of starting a family is the next logical step to take in a loving relationship. Hence, being in what was perceived to be a stable relationship played a strong factor in some of the young women's 'readiness' for motherhood.

Transition to Adulthood

Becoming an Adult

For Lisa, having a baby was one way in which she felt she could take on more responsibility in her life generally, and more specifically through displaying a desire to

take on a stronger commitment within her relationship. When asked about how she thought her life changed once she had a baby she replied:

‘I think it changed me in a big way. I think I have a lot more responsibility, I’ve changed. I’m more mature. I’m not saying I was immature but you get wiser every day, but it would be a big step in my life to have a child. It makes a commitment, not between my partner and I but a bigger bond between us. This is our baby, and it’s not like its our responsibility, it is our responsibility, but a joyful responsibility. But it’s there, it’s happiness, your wee bundle of love. Till it’s 16 (laugh)!’

For Lorna, deciding to become a mother was an obvious transition into adulthood just as is going to college or preparing for a career is for other young people:

‘I wouldn’t say I’ve got a nice house, I’ve no got a career even though I do want a career but some people do it first and then they have their children, but I might not have the chance to conceive in 10 years time, I might have ovarian cancer, I don’t know, but I’ve got the chance, I’m gonna take it. I can always get a career, it’s always there for me, I can always go to college but having a baby is, you’ve got to take it when you can get it...’

Lorna was clear that for her, college or the opportunity to have a career would always be there for her but felt less certain of the ability to have a baby if she waited till she was older. As a result, Lorna made a conscious decision to make her transition to adulthood through becoming a mother rather than through going to college or engaging in a career path.

Finally, for some young women, becoming a mother meant being treated as an adult, an experience they may not have had prior to taking on this new identity. Leanne provides a good example of this:

‘I think my family listens to me more now because I’ve taken a big step and I’m more grown up now ‘cause I’ve had to grow up, I’ve got a baby. Em, I think they listen to me and respect me a lot more than before whereas before I was just sorta a little girl, you know what I mean? Whereas, I’m a mother now, I’ve grown up a lot, so ye, I think they respect and treat me a lot more.’

Leanne went on to say that it was not only her family who treated her with more respect; community based professionals and even shop assistants also did so. This demonstrates that for some young women, the choice to become a young mother may not only be influenced by their view of motherhood as being a transition to adulthood, but one that may also have some influence on the way she is viewed by others.

Motherhood as Purpose

Motherhood as a transition to adulthood can also be explored through examining the women's reflections on what they thought their lives would have been like if they had not had a baby. More often than not, their responses revealed that having a baby enhanced their quality of life. In response to the question, 'If you didn't have your child right now, what do you think your life would be like?' Lorna answered:

'I think it would be worse than what it is now. If I never had Annie...I would say honestly, if I never had Annie, I'd either be locked up, I'd either be a Corton Vale¹⁵ or I'd be dead, one of the two because with everything that I've been through in my life it's been hard, eh. Like she keeps me going...'

This was similarly experienced by Karen who felt that having children would give her some purpose in life which she did not believe she would get through going to college or through paid employment:

'I think it would be boring. I don't know where I would be...but I think I'd be bored and I don't think I'd have a job or be in college...With kids you know that you've got to do something everyday...'

Thus demonstrating that for Karen, it is important that she feel that she has responsibilities and that raising children is the way in which she believes she can fulfil

¹⁵ Corton Vale is a Women's Prison in Scotland.

this desire. For Veronica, understanding her transition to motherhood as part of her developing into an adult is an experience she discusses in hindsight:

‘When I had Nicky, I think the main thing I got was reality. I got woke up to reality. It was showing what life could be like, not what it was going to be like. A lot of people I knew, like I know, like some of them have bairns, but others are just idiots now. They’re still doing the same thing, hanging out about the streets and things like that. And you think, I could be like them, I think, I’m doing better with my life than you lot. Ken, cause I can still do anything that I want to do but I’m doing better than what they’re doing and I’ve got more chance now than before I had Nicky.’

This narrative suggests that becoming a mother has resulted in Veronica taking a step back from her peer group and critically considering what her life would be like if she hadn’t had her daughter. Prior to becoming pregnant, Veronica had no intention of becoming a mother. Yet Veronica’s experience has lead her to believe that in making the decision to become a mother, she has ‘woken up to reality’ and as such, feels able to do more with her life than ‘hanging’ about the street’.

Discussion

Motherhood has always been viewed as a transition to adulthood in that it encompasses a whole range of responsibilities such as caring and other domestic responsibilities (Morrows and Richards, 1996). Moreover, it is also a role that is central to adult feminine identity for all women regardless of class or ‘race’ (Morrow and Richards, 1996). In more recent times, feminists have documented the deeply held perceptions of women’s natural role as carers (Hooyman and Gonyea, 1995) and, in regard to the lives and experiences of young women, the larger expectations put onto to young women to become ‘young carers’¹⁶ (Tucker and Liddiard, 1998). However,

¹⁶ A young carer is someone under the age of 18 who lives with and cares for a parent or sibling with a mental or physical illness. For more information on young carers see Bibby and Becker, 2000, and

it appears that both feminist and mainstream literature on 'caring' has failed to reflect the experiences of women, such as the ones interviewed in this study, who continue to be socially and culturally entrenched in a world where 'caring' is viewed and experienced as a positive role.

Although the young mothers in this study are far from homogenous and thus had various reasons for feeling ready or able to become a young mother, one common thread emerging from their 'decision making' stories were their perceptions of caring duties. The findings from this study indicate that often times engaging in both mothering and other caring duties started long before a young woman had seriously contemplated starting a family of her own and that this responsibility has provided them the confidence and desire to care for their own children. Hence, reflecting the experiences of the working-class young mothers in McRobbie's (2000) study, the women who participated in my research experienced both a sense of responsibility and pride in their caring and other domestic contributions. This suggests that a large aspect of the working-class young women's values have evolved out of and are reflected through their past and potentially future responsibilities of caring.

It also appears that the success or pride working-class young mothers attach to caring responsibilities has prepared them or resulted in their 'readiness' for motherhood. This is hardly surprising considering that for many young women, the transition to adulthood is closely connected to gaining status as a mother (Batsleer, 1996). As Barbara (2001) argues, this was particularly the case for the young women who developed more confidence and self-esteem in regard to caring duties than in academic endeavours (Barbara, 2001). Although the transition to motherhood does

Tucker and Liddiard, 1998.

not necessarily mean that a woman has made the transition into adulthood, for the majority of women in this study, becoming a mother was the impetus that allowed both themselves and others to perceive them as holding new and valued responsibilities, which enabled them to make the transition toward adulthood. This is in contrast with views put forth by Taberner et al (2000), who argue that becoming a young mother can 'prevent them from making the transition to adulthood in the same way as other teenagers' (p.36) as a result of their continued dependence of support from their family of origin.

The belief that depending on familial support in the raising of children will hinder a young woman's transition to adulthood neglects to consider the impact of class and 'race' and as such, puts forth a view that there is only one positive trajectory that will result in the successful transition to adulthood. Yet, in many Asian cultures, the caring provided to children by extended family members has been a part of the traditional model of the family (Ofstedal and Knodel, 1999). Furthermore, in today's society, one acceptable transition toward adulthood for middle-class young people is to leave home at 18 to go to university whilst receiving financial support from their family. In many of these instances the young person moves back home over summers or even once they finish their degree until they can find a job that will enable them to financially support themselves. Consequently, just like the parent who financially and emotionally supports their child through university in their belief that they are supporting a transition toward adulthood, so is the parent who financially (if possible) and emotionally supports their daughter in their decision to become a mother in the belief that taking on this role is legitimate transition to adulthood.

Young Mothers, Abortion, and the Discourse of Responsibility

During an early participant observation session that took place within a group about teenage pregnancy, the young mothers engaged in a heated discussion about abortion. Emerging from this discussion, was an overwhelming view that the decision to have an abortion was in some way irresponsible, particularly in cases where it appeared that a young woman was in control of her decision not to use contraception. Although my original interview schedule did not include any questions about the young women's views about abortion, this incident alerting me to yet another key issue which may have influenced the young women's decisions to mothers. Consequently, a key aspect of the interview became focused on the young mothers' views about abortion.

'It's my bed, I gotta lie in it'

Throughout my interviews with the young mothers, it became increasingly clear that even when news about the pregnancy initially resulted in feelings of fear and anxiety, class and cultural values prevented the majority of the young mothers from considering abortion as a solution to dealing with an unplanned pregnancy. Seventeen of the 20 women were very much against abortion whether it is for themselves or for others, and of the three women who felt that abortion was a justifiable option, two had previously had an abortion. Yet, regardless of their own personal choices, all the women conveyed strong feelings related to this issue.

I asked the young mothers to share with me the decision making process they went through in deciding to carry their baby to term. The most frequent response to this question is best articulated by Lorna who stated:

‘I was like, I got myself into it, I cannae just get myself out of it that quickly. I have to just face up to the responsibilities. If I ever pregnant eh, I just got to deal with it, I got myself into that predicament so I gottae get myself outa it.’

Hence, for Lorna, as for the majority of the young women who participated in this study, ‘getting outa it’ it meant continuing with the pregnancy and becoming a mother. Moreover, Lorna also appears to suggest that, in her view, that once a woman becomes pregnant, she is no longer only responsible to herself, but to the unborn child as well. Chloe demonstrates this responsibility to the foetus through stating, ‘even if I wasn’t in a relationship there wouldn’t be a thought going through my mind that I wouldn’t want these children. They are part of my body, they’re my flesh and blood’. Both Lorna’s and Chloe’s statements reflect Burghes and Brown (1995) arguments that the attitudes that persuade mothers to keep their babies are complex and difficult to disentangle. They also indicate that decisions to see a pregnancy through are not taken lightly, challenging the notion that young women become young mothers under a veil of passivity (Allen and Dowling, 1998). Moreover, the statements of ‘responsibility’ articulated by the women contradict stigmatising discourses of irresponsibility.

The interviews also demonstrated that even women who were supportive of the idea of ‘choice’ believed that having an abortion was an irresponsible way to deal with an unplanned pregnancy. For example, Lisa stated,

‘I think that, I mean me personally, I would never do it. I understand why some people do it, the situation that they’re in but as I say to people, if it’s right for them, it’s right for them, but they’ve got to understand they’ve got themselves into that position. They knew what they were doing at the time and the consequences it would take and nine out of ten times it does happen eh...it’s just not for me, I would never do it.’

Hence, even though Lisa demonstrates some understanding toward women who choose to have an abortion, she does this within a discourse of responsibility. As such, she suggests that to have an abortion due to an unplanned pregnancy that could have been prevented is in fact, not dealing with the consequences of one's irresponsible actions. Furthermore the anti-abortion narratives also appear to have been one key way through which the young women in this study distanced themselves from what they believed to be the values of middle-class women. As a result, referring to class was sometimes used a way in which to contextualise the women's choice to maintain a pregnancy or not to have an abortion. For example, as Ally stated, 'all the high class people, I mean, they just fall pregnant, they go get an abortion eh, where a young lassie like me eh, I don't agree with abortion'. This statement reflects the way in which class may influence the decision making process with regard to teenage pregnancy and, in a sense, is useful for the young women as a way in which to both identify themselves as part of a group or community that finds young motherhood acceptable. It is not surprising then, that some of the young mothers I interviewed or met during my time at the young parents' project as a participant observer displayed a desire to keep previous abortions or reasons for considering an abortion secret. This was poignantly demonstrated through Tracy's experience as young mother who felt so strongly the shame of a planned abortion that she told others in the Stepping Stones project that her healthy foetus had a severe abnormality; she knew this would be more likely to give her 'permission' to have the abortion, and at the same time support from her friends. Finally, in two other cases where abortion was an option that was seriously considered, the decision not to have an abortion was influenced by the young woman's sexual partner who put pressure on her to keep the baby.

The discourse of responsibility surrounding abortion, and the subsequent pressure it appears to have put on some working-class young women to maintain a pregnancy, was further reinforced by the legitimising of certain instances where abortion could be viewed as acceptable. The young women provided their own examples of circumstances where abortions are or are not viewed as being legitimate. For example, Anna stated that she didn't believe that a woman should have an abortion unless it was 'really necessary'. When I asked what she thought would be a legitimate reason to have an abortion she replied, "Just if you were raped or if your baby was handicapped or something". Anna's views reflect a common theme emerging from the interviews, which suggest that abortion is only acceptable in cases where pregnancy, or the circumstances resulting in a pregnancy, were out of the control of the mother such as in the case of rape, or where there is something 'wrong' with the foetus. This corresponds with research demonstrating that teenagers show the greatest tolerance for having an abortion when the reasons involve the health of the woman, a pregnancy resulting from rape or incest, and the possibility of foetal defect (Stone and Waszak, 1992).

Contrary to the women in my study, Woollett and Marshall (1997) found that for the young women in their study the decision to take contraception in preventing pregnancy was paramount to the act of taking responsibility for one's own body, even under problematic circumstances. Instead, the young women that I interviewed demonstrated that for them, taking responsibility for one's body upon *becoming* pregnant is of equal importance. Consequently, upon becoming pregnant, a large number of the young mothers I interviewed no longer saw their body as entirely their

own, but as belonging to their unborn baby whom they now had a responsibility to care for. As such, the young mothers who were interviewed for my research suggest that contrary to the discourse of irresponsibility surrounding teenage pregnancy and young motherhood, being 'responsible' meant choosing to have the baby over having an abortion if in fact having an abortion was ever even a consideration.

Discussion

These interviews suggest that abortion amongst working-class and poor young women may be far less of an occurrence than what have been represented through recent statistics that suggest that rates of abortion in Britain are fairly high (Teenage Pregnancy Unit, 1999). National statistics indicate that over a third of conceptions to under 20's end in abortion that suggest indicate that this figure is rising (ONS, 1998) and have stated that pregnant teenagers are also one and a half times more likely than women in their 20's to have an abortion at 13 weeks or later (SEU, 1999). However, the statistics do not state who these teenagers are either in terms of class, 'race' or ethnicity. Perhaps the statistic that is most interesting to this study is one that states that amongst under 16s, just over half of all pregnancies are terminated. This ratio has changed little since the mid 70's indicating that rates of abortion for young women under the age of 16 years old have not increased even though availability and accessibility of abortion services have. This further suggests that availability is only one factor influencing whether or not a young woman decides to terminate her pregnancy. Hence, unlike Tabberer et al (2000) who found that decisions regarding whether or not to continue with a pregnancy were influenced by a lack of information regarding abortion as a choice, all the young women in this study were very much

aware that abortion was one solution to their pregnancy. Yet, even when abortion was an option that was seriously considered, it was still an option that didn't feel like a legitimate way in which to deal with their pregnancy. Consequently, it appears that knowledge, values, social attitudes and access to services will also have an effect on a young woman's actions and choices regarding her pregnancy (population trends 1999, in Rowlingson and McKay, 2002).

As demonstrated earlier, 17 out of 20 of the young women who participated in my study had not ever considered abortion as an option. This corresponds with Allen and Dowling's (1998) study which showed that although 73 per cent of the young women they interviewed had not planned to get pregnant, they all went on to have their babies. This appears to be in contrast to statistics exploring middle-class girls' choices where there is an increase in the numbers of pregnancies ending in abortion as compared to working-class girls (Smith, 1993, Walkerdine et al, 2001). Research has also shown that a major influence on the decision to have an abortion has been linked to a young woman's perceptions of their future prospect such as continuing on in higher education (Plotnick, 1992, Rowlingson and McKay, 2002). Not surprisingly, young women with high educational expectations showed a reduced rate of premarital pregnancy but in the event of pregnancy, showed an increase in the choice to terminate (Plotnick, 1992). This suggests that abortion may be generally a middle-class affair in that although some of the women I interviewed were either in paid employment or in college at the time they became pregnant, none of the young women viewed having a child as having a negative impact on either their past, present or future employment or education goals.

The question still remains, however, as to the root of the values or attitudes attached to abortion held by the young women interviewed for my research. Perhaps, as Walkerdine, et al (2001) suggest, the working-class girl experiences 'the fecund body as a psychically and socially safe place to be'. This would not be surprising considering the familiar site of young mothers in the Greater Pilton community, not to mention the young mothers' positive experiences of increased confidence and responsibility. Through an analysis of the reasons why the young mothers in my study display such strong feelings against the idea of abortion, at least for themselves individually, one can illustrate how the influence of class and culture, including a culture of pressure to carry a baby to term, are two interlinking elements that maintain the visibility of young motherhood within the Greater Pilton community.

Middle-class women are well aware of abortion as a choice and although this is a very difficult decision for any women to make, it is one that has been supported by the feminist movement and women's health organisations. However, feminist perspectives on 'choice' have not appeared to permeate into the lives of working-class women, particularly for those that participated in this study. This indicates the need for further inquiry into the lives of working-class women with regard to their views on what they believe are logical, acceptable and realistic transitions toward adulthood and about their futures more generally. Consequently, we may be more able to find out whether or not young women feel that they do not have any choice apart from becoming a mother or if becoming a mother is the logical choice for them given the social, economic and cultural positioning in society. It may be that this is one in the same thing suggesting that young women from working-class communities will

continue to become young mothers until such time as they are socially and culturally programmed to seriously consider or access other careers.

Finally, for the majority of the young mothers in my study, becoming a young mother is viewed as a legitimate and accepted position to take by their peers, families and community. As such, the young women's opinions about abortion may also be influenced by the fact that they live in a community where the subject of abortion is generally discussed in negative terms; where teenage pregnancy and young viewed negatively. Within Greater Pilton, teenage pregnancy and young motherhood is highly visible whereas abortion is invisible and this is compounded by the perception that abortion is perceived to be a middle class option which reflects the disparity between working-class and middle-class values.

It appears then, that young motherhood is not only seen as culturally acceptable within this particular community, but that is also influenced by the class of the women I interviewed, identified with. Moreover, it also has enabled the young mothers to create a position from which to 'other' middle-class values. At times this may have been achieved through exaggerating middle-class behaviour, however, this is no different from the process of 'othering' that is present in the dominant discourse on teenage pregnancy and young motherhood. Hence reasons for making the decision to become a young mother may not only be made as a result of the young women's own values, but due to the values that appear most acceptable to other young mothers who they have regular contact with.

Beyond Pregnancy

As I have demonstrated there are a number of cultural, social and emotional factors involved in the decision making process that results in a young woman's choice to become a young mother. Hence, given the process that the young women went through in making this decision, I wondered how they felt in the very early days of being a young mother.

When I asked the question 'How did you feel when your baby was born?' I was met with a number of responses. Often times the response to this question was very straightforward. This is reflected through Anna's experience who stated, 'Emotional. I was knackered. But I made his bed, held him, and told him I was going to love him'. However, the majority of the responses put forward by young mothers in this study were more complex demonstrating a range of emotions linked to the experience of being a new mother. A number of the young mothers experienced what they reported to be both an easy yet demanding life change upon the birth of their child. For example, when I asked Liz how she felt immediately after the birth of her daughter she replied:

'I don't know what it was, but everything just clicked naturally. Like I started breast feeding right away and she latched on perfectly and she slept through the night the very first night. She'd have her last feed at 11pm and that would be her till 6am. So I never had any problems as far as sleep was concerned. The biggest change was in having someone so wee depending on ye, and you've got to think about their every move before you think about yourself and its like, I want to go out clubbing or that but its like getting a babysitter, and will she be alright staying here, is she feeling OK to go away and stay outside the house and things eh. Having [my daughter] has changed my life dramatically especially now that I'm bringing her up on my own. It's a really demanding job, but I find it really easy (laugh). Its demanding but its easy just because she is so good.'

Although Liz's narrative suggests that having a 'good' baby can make the transition to motherhood a fairly 'easy' one, Lorna also demonstrates the various thoughts and

feelings associated with being a new mother. Hence, in addition to feeling that being a mother was something that came naturally to her, Liz was also met with feeling a newfound sense of responsibility and a realisation of the demands associated with being a mother.

A range of emotions was also experienced by young mothers whose initial experiences with birth and motherhood were more difficult. Dionne experienced a difficult birth that eventually resulted in her having a caesarean section and a delay in being able to hold her son. When I asked her how she felt when she was finally able to hold her son she replied:

‘I don’t know, ‘cause you’re trying to take it in that he’s yours for keeps...I still couldn’t believe he was mine, he was that gorgeous (laugh). And when I could finally sit up and I was more with it, I was just like all happy. Its mixed, you’re sorta emotional as well’.

Dionne also stated that when, six days later, she took her son home she felt ‘confident’ in her new role as a mother. In her mind, this was because of the initial support she received in the hospital, which she felt gave her the opportunity to begin her first days as a mother in a safe and supported environment.

There were also a smaller number of young women who initially experienced more difficulty in their role as a new mother. For example, in the very early days of being a mother Leanne stated that she sometimes felt like she couldn’t ‘cope with this’. This was due to the combination of her experiencing ‘the baby blues for wee while’ and the fact that her son was extremely ‘colicky and sickly’ which resulted in Leanne getting very little sleep. At the same time however, Leanne also stated that she received a lot

of support from her parents and as such also felt that 'it was totally worth it', that 'she loved it', and took the attitude that 'this is just what mothers go through'.

There was one young woman who experienced particularly difficult feelings and emotions in the initial stages of being a new mother. When I asked Donna how she felt when her daughter was first born she replied:

'I never rejected her but I never ever made a big deal either until she started getting that wee, the more time we spent together the better the bond got. Like at first it was just sorta 'this is my life ruined' basically. And then as time went on and I accepted it'.

Further reflection on my interview with Donna indicates that there may have been a number of factors that contributed to the difficulties she initially experienced as a new mother. First, Donna, unlike the other mothers in this study, never felt completely comfortable with her decision to become a mother. Moreover, Donna also stated that she found it difficult to ask her mother for support when she was feeling down because she did not want to burden her when 'her plate was already full'. Nevertheless, Donna also stated that she thinks she has coped with becoming a young mother 'quite well' because she 'never wanted to run out and leave her and things like that' and decided that she 'just had to get on with it'.

What these narratives suggest, is that in addition to the complexities involved in engaging in a process of decision making regarding the choice to become a mother, initial feelings about being a mother are also incredibly varied. This is hardly surprising considering that women, regardless of their age, rarely prepare themselves for the feelings they will have upon becoming a mother. Drawing on the young mothers 'finding out', 'decision making' and 'becoming a young mother' narratives, it appears that the emotions a young woman may experience in the early days of

motherhood may be influenced by a number of factors. These include the feelings that a young woman has about becoming a young mother, the support a young woman has in making her decision to become a young mother and with her mothering once the baby arrives, and the social and emotional circumstances she experiences throughout her pregnancy and at the time of the birth. These experiences raise important questions about the type of support offered to young mothers following the birth of their child and in the months and years that follow. Of particular interest to this study are the young women's experiences of being a young mother and the social and political factors that will impact on her identity and role. This is a central question of this study and one that will be examined in-depth in the following chapters.

Conclusion

The narratives of the young mothers from Greater Pilton suggest that there are many paths that a young woman takes in becoming a mother, most of which are ignored in the development of social policy and practice in the fields of education, health and social work. These findings also suggest that not only are there numerous factors that influence a young woman's process of decision making with regard to becoming a mother but that the reasons for choosing to become a mother are also greatly varied. As a result there are two issues that will need to be further addressed. First, it seems clear that given the blurred lines between 'planned' and 'unplanned' pregnancies, sexual health education that focuses primarily on information about contraception will have little or no effect in decreasing pregnancies amongst working-class or poor young women. This has implications for the way in which sexual health education policies are funded and how practice is developed both in the school and the community. This would include a more in-depth examination by policy makers and practitioners in to

the circumstances that surround 'unwanted' and 'unplanned' pregnancies, and a larger focus on issues of power as has been evidenced within some of the young women's stories. Second, given that many young women from working-class or poor communities want to become mothers and appear to gain confidence and a higher sense of self-worth and purpose that contribute to their making a transition into adulthood, one needs to challenge the notion that young motherhood is in fact a 'social problem' and that in addition to putting into place policies and practices that help to decrease unwanted pregnancies, policies and practices that support young women in being mothers is developed as well.

At the same time, young women from socially deprived communities are very often defined by their sexuality and are treated as 'sexual deviants' even before they become pregnant through discourse on the sexual behaviour of working class and poor young woman. The negative portrayal of the working-class/poor teenage girl's sexuality is found mainly in mainstream sexual health education and teenage pregnancy literature (Hudson and Ineichen, 1991, Kiernan, 1995) that suggests the need to control and regulate their sexual behaviour. Walkerdine et al (2001) maintain that the notion of motherhood functions differently for working-class than for middle-class girls in that although the sexual behaviour of working-class and middle-class girls may be quite similar, the results of that activity differs through the choices they make regarding birth control and pregnancy. Consequently, in line with Walkerdine et al's (2001) argument that the genealogy of the single mother requires further exploration, this chapter has attempted to demonstrate, the working-class young women's social and emotional journey toward becoming a young mother.

Chapter Six

Young Mothers and Social Exclusion

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is twofold. The first is to explore the various ways in which young mothers, particularly from working-class and poor communities, experience social exclusion. It is important to be clear from the outset that the young mothers in this study were not aware of and did not use the term ‘social exclusion’ when talking about their educational, employment or human services experiences. However, they were able to clearly articulate experiences of stigmatisation associated with being a pregnant teenager and a young mother that took place outside their local community. For example, when I asked the question ‘how do you think young motherhood is viewed by people living outside Greater Pilton?’, I was met with a number of stories of social exclusion. Lorna’s narrative clearly demonstrates this:

‘Em, with going up town...it’s the looks you get when you’re in town shopping...I mean I look about seventeen or eighteen, but em, it’s the looks you get from like security guards in shopping centres, you know?...maybe they think she’s just had a bairn on a one night stand. I feel that for most young parents they get judged really badly and it’s no the case. I mean, one of the lassies here [at Stepping Stones] is em...she’s been married for god knows how many years and she planned her second baby and they think, ‘I’m sorry, what a shame hen’, you know?’

Lorna demonstrates that being, or even looking like a young mother can result in the assignment of different stigmatised identities ranging from that of ‘loose’ woman to victim. This overlooks the varied trajectories and identities concerned with teenage pregnancy and young motherhood as discussed in previous chapters.

The second aim of this chapter is to investigate the assertion that New Labour's social exclusion and inclusion policies and programmes have thus far failed to address the needs of young mothers and in many instances, may exacerbate rather than alleviate their experiences of social exclusion. In order to achieve this, I will focus on the social exclusion of young mothers in education, employment and the human services.

Social Exclusion in Education

There were a number of ways in which the young mothers in this study experienced social exclusion in relation to education. An analysis of their narratives reveals that social exclusion was experienced in a variety of educational contexts, including secondary school and further education institutions.

'Self-exclusion' from education

None of the young mothers in this study had a history of being formally excluded from school however, six young mothers chose not to continue with their education albeit for different reasons. Sometimes, the reason for this 'self-exclusion'¹⁷ from education had little to do with their pregnancy. For example, both Veronica and Leanne had already decided not to continue with school after 4th year and look for paid employment instead¹⁸. However, Nicki's experience demonstrates how 'self-exclusion' from education may not be that straight forward when the decision is

¹⁷ Self-exclusion is a term used by New Labour to explain the exclusion of young people from 16+ education. This is a contested term and one that I have put into parenthesis to demonstrate that this is a political term rather than one that accurately defines the process through which working-class young women leave school.

¹⁸ The minimum age at which young people are allowed to leave school in Scotland is 16 years; this means they are allowed to leave school during or after 4th year (Scottish Office Information

directly linked to a pregnancy. Nicki, who was in her 5th year of high school, had decided to stay on until the end of the year and had originally thought she would take her final exams as her baby was not due until the end of the summer. However, Nicki, who made her intentions clear to both her social education and her 'main' teacher, received mixed messages about this decision. Nicki stated that although her social education teacher 'didn't have a problem with it' and 'was quite happy for me to stay on at school, her 'main' teacher reacted both embarrassed and dismissive. This was evidenced through his concerns regarding Nicki's standard of school work since becoming pregnant, whilst at the same insisting that her pregnancy was 'none of my business' and that 'you don't have to tell me' when Nicki attempted to discuss the effect that her pregnancy may or may not have on her ability to take her final exams. Three months before the end of term, Nicki decided not to take her final exams although in retrospect, Nicki stated that 'if I had known I was gonnae be the size that I was at 7 month, I would have been able to go in and do it, no problem!' The circumstances surrounding Nicky's decision not to take her final exams, raises important questions about the issues underpinning a pregnant teenager's 'self-exclusion' from school. Furthermore, her experience also raise questions about the current availability and effectiveness of support to pregnant teenagers who are in the process of making decisions about whether or not to continue their education.

There were also two young mothers who had already finished their 4th year and had been in the process of applying to college. However, as a result of their pregnancies they chose to put off this decision. This was sometimes presented as being related directly to the young mother's desire to be a 'stay-at-home' mother. For example,

Directorate, 1996).

Chloe had had ambitions to go to Drama College but chose to invest her time in being at home with her child full time. When I asked her if she had thought about reapplying to college in the future she stated:

‘I have thought about it and I have thought about going to something like that but more on the business side of it, but every time I try to get into college there is something holding me back. Like Jason was too young and couldn’t get into a crèche then, now I’ve got Brenda and she’s too young, she can’t get into a crèche...But, I mean, even when Jason and Brenda are in primary school, I could still consider going back then because it’s no, it would have to fit around their hours so I could consider it, but at the moment, I have to be fitting around their hours.’

Hence for Chloe, two different pressures prevented her from continuing with her education. First, she was unable to go back to college because her child was too young to use the crèche, and second, her personal values about good parenting got in the way of her attending. Chloe’s experience clearly demonstrates the ways in which young mothers in Greater Pilton are excluded from education. In order to access the free crèche at the local college, a child must be over the age of two years which in turn, effectively excludes young mothers from further education for a period of years, while their child (and often children) are small. In addition, Chloe’s assertion that she organise her educational aspirations around her children’s schedules is also representative of the majority of the young mothers in this sample. The young mothers in Greater Pilton were particularly uncomfortable with the idea of putting their child in a crèche unless it was attached to a community resource that they themselves were using. As will be discussed further in this chapter, this discomfort is directly related to their desire to ‘put their children first’ which, in this case, means that if they are choosing to go back to school or college, it must be organised in such a way that they do not feel as if they are abandoning their children. This suggests

that even if a subsidized crèche space is available, some young mothers may continue to engage in a process of 'self-exclusion' from furthering their education.

Another issue facing young mothers who considered continuing their education after their children were born, concerns the lack of educational support. This was the case for both Ainsley and Kat, who had planned to go back to college after having their babies. Ainsley stated that the secretarial course she attempted to take did not offer any obvious support for single mothers, and she lacked the confidence to ask for help when she needed it. Moreover, Kat felt that her teachers 'just didn't care' about her circumstances. She was advised that she would have to restart her course after her baby was born, without being given any credit for the learning she had already achieved. In both these instances, the young mothers dropped out of college. These experiences suggest that there are a number of barriers that pregnant young women face in regard to being able to finish both secondary school and post-school education programmes. Although not formally excluded, for the young mothers in Greater Pilton, these barriers often resulted in 'self-exclusion' from education. It is important to situate this issue in its wider structural context. As such, it is important to consider why working-class young women tend to leave school at age 16 years, and how this may be a contributing factor in preventing young women from going back to study after having a baby.

Discussion

Young mothers tend to live in socially and economically disadvantaged communities and, as is common for many young people living in these areas, they experience discriminatory educational practices even before they become pregnant (Pearce and

Hillman, 1998). As Bentley (1998) points out, young people living in housing estates often experience barriers to educational success such as lack of financial resources, informal learning opportunities, role models, and cultural support. Moreover, the notion of going to university holds little or no relevance to them as a result of their belief that there are no jobs to be had, regardless of their continuing with education (Colley and Hodkinson, 2000). For these and other reasons such as the pressure of school league tables, young people who do not stand out as academic achievers early on, do not receive the support needed to help them to succeed in education. Furthermore, there are important gender issues here. As Packham (2000) articulates,

‘While male exclusion is a cause for concern and short-term strategies have been speedily introduced to tackle this overt issue, young women, disabled, lesbian and gay, working-class and black young people will continue to be the hidden excluded. These individuals may not be visible, as they may have adopted non-confrontational strategies of resistance which do not lead to legal exclusion’ (p.169).

Consequently, leaving school at the age of 16 is not an uncommon path for young people living in socially deprived communities or who experience other forms of discrimination. Although pregnancy or young motherhood provides only one of the reasons for this, it has been argued that other reasons for young women’s exclusion from education have not been adequately addressed within educational or social policy (Osler et al, 2002).

The young mothers’ interviews correspond with criticisms aimed at the Social Exclusion Unit’s report on ‘Bridging the Gap’ (SEU, 1999) that argue that this report fails to recognise how issues such as ‘race’, class and gender are the driving force behind young people’s exclusion from education, and instead, continues to focus on

cultural pathology and stereotypes (Colley and Hodkinson, 2001). As a result, the 'Bridging the Gap' programme has also been criticised for failing to address overarching inequalities such as gender and 'race' as the source of exclusion (Colley and Hodkinson, 2001). This is reflected in the underlying assumption that teenage pregnancy can be decreased through the provision of more accessible education. Although this may be true for young women who are either clear about their desire not to become pregnant or who are in control of their sexual health, it glosses over other factors that lead to teenage pregnancy, which I have discussed earlier. The projects that have emerged out of the 'Bridging the Gap' report (SEU, 1999b), also appears to have done little in addressing the needs of young mothers who want, but do not feel confident enough, to access mainstream education or training outside their communities. Hence, although participants are provided with the support of a personal advisor throughout their participation in 'Bridging the Gap', this may only be useful to young people who are accessing this particular route to education and training.

The exclusion of young, working-class or poor young mothers from education is also evident in the recent findings about the impact of the LPCCG in Scotland. This research has shown that only 75% of Scottish lone parents in further or higher education are making use of the LPCCG and that only 10% of those lone parents are under the age of 25 (Ballantyne et al, 2003). This is because, regardless of their age, lone parents chose not claim the LPGCC. Most relevant to this research is that 65% of the lone parents under 25 years age who attended a further or higher education programme did not claim the LPCCG were because they had a preference for

informal childcare arrangements¹⁹. These findings raise important questions about the small percentage of 'younger' lone parents accessing funded education and that also includes funding for childcare. Moreover, it also highlights the fact that working-class or poor mothers, regardless of their age, prefer informal rather than formal childcare arrangements.

The experiences of the young mothers process of 'self-exclusion' from education when held up against criticisms about 'Bridging the Gap' (SEU, 1999b) and Ballantyne et al's (2003) report on the LPCCG, indicate that the way in which New Labour has attempted to increase educational participation will hold little relevance for working-class or poor young mothers. Rather, the young mothers' interviews suggest that what may be a more successful consideration in making education more accessible to them would be to offer these types of programmes within their own communities and that these programmes have on-site day care. This is because, when the young mothers in this study did decided to engage in education or training programmes, they attended courses that were offered within supportive, familiar and encouraging environments, such as the one's available at Stepping Stones through by 'Second Chance to Learn'²⁰. The young mothers also attended courses at nearby community centres that worked in partnership with Stepping Stones, which allowed the young mothers to have their children in day care at the Stepping Stones nursery. However, these courses are not recognised in the same way as the programmes that have emerged out of 'Bridging the Gap' or the Scottish Executive's Child Poverty

¹⁹ Formal child care in this context is state registered child care whereas informal child care is child care provided by a friend or relative.

²⁰ Second Chance to Learn is a community based first step learning programme specifically developed for people who left school without qualifications or who had a negative experience at school. The provide courses that will enable them to learn in an informal and supportive environment.

Package and as such do not offer 'perks' such as having a personal advisor, ongoing educational support or funding for child care. This suggests that the educational avenues that are emotionally and socially accessible to young mothers have yet to be acknowledged through government policy as a legitimate process of continuing education. These are important issues that are closely associated with barriers to citizenship and as such, will be discussed in greater depth in the following chapter.

Finally, there is one more important fact that lies in the face of much of the social exclusion rhetoric concerning the connection between education and young mothers. Studies have demonstrated that delayed schooling for young mothers translated into increased educational attainment at a later date that was comparable to women who had not had their education interrupted (Furstenburg and Weiss, 1997, Horwitz et al, 1991 in Rich and Kim, 1999). This data refutes the assumption inherent in social policies such as the social exclusion report 'Bridging the Gap' (1999b), that young mothers maintain a cycle of low educational attainment or aspirations due to their own lack of educational experience. Rather, as documented by Rich and Kim (1999) 'the proportion of teen mothers who enrol later in life is far from trivial...which in turn significantly reduced the gap between teen mothers and women who delayed their first births' (p.780). Rich and Kim also suggest the need to look at the factors that facilitate later life education, what enables or hinders this process and what impact this will have on their children. In depth research regarding the factors that facilitate later life education go beyond the scope of this study, however, it is important to point out that the majority of the young mothers I interviewed did have plans to return to some type of educational setting once their children were older.

Social Exclusion from Sexual Health Education

Experiences of educational exclusion are also found in the classroom, specifically with regard to the way in which young working-class women are taught sexual health education. As already demonstrated in the last chapter, it appears that the main purpose of sexual health education is to decrease so-called 'unwanted' or 'unplanned' pregnancies. Yet, this fails to address other aspects of sexual health that are just as, if not more relevant to working-class young women (Epstein and Johnson, 1998, Walkerdine, et al, 2001). Only one of the young women interviewed for this study did not have any knowledge of birth control and what seemed to be more important was that the young mothers did not appear to have the confidence or feelings of safety in which to negotiate safer sex practices, as is demonstrated through Dionne's account:

'I started to get slapped across the face, you know, started getting beat up and then there was a court case due for him hitting me...I just had to say to the police that I couldn't remember you know...just to cover up for him about what had happened that night, about him hitting me, just to cover up for him so that he wouldn't go to jail...in a way I was scared of him...and then in April I found out that I was pregnant. But it was a stupid mistake. I went to his house and ended up staying the night and then I got pregnant after that.'

Dionne demonstrates the difficulty she had in making 'safe' decisions for herself due to the violence and intimidation of her ex-partner, suggesting that young women need a platform in which to discuss the issue of violence in relationships.

I also learned directly about the young mothers' experiences of social exclusion in relation to sexual health education strategies and practices during two different participant observation sessions. In the first session, one of the mothers said she was

disgusted by the way in which the government decides how to provide sex education. She stated forcefully her view that the government keeps putting money into trying to decrease teenage pregnancy in 'all these different yet useless ways, yet they won't fund schools with dolls - the type that you can take home and are computerized to cry anytime, day or night when they are hungry, need changing, cuddles etc. that might actually work to decrease pregnancy'. There was a round of agreement from the group following this observation. During the following participant observation session, I learned that the young mothers also felt that it was important to them to portray both the positive and negative aspects of young motherhood. This discussion covered their dismay at the way in which teenage pregnancy and young motherhood was portrayed to students and the potential fears and anxieties that a young woman would consequently experience.

Although the young mothers acknowledged the range of emotions a young woman goes through in discovering that she is pregnant, of greater concern to them, was the lack of information available in school regarding support for young women who choose to keep their babies. In addition, the interviews with the young mothers' also raised questions about the availability of support for pregnant students or young mothers who may wish to continue their education throughout their pregnancy and after the birth of their baby. The Wester Hailes Education Centre (WHEC) has attempted to address these issues through hosting a project, which offers mainstream education and childcare to young mothers in Edinburgh and Midlothian (Westerhailes Education Centre Online). However, even though this programme has been viewed as a successful attempt at supporting young mothers in the educational pursuits, this project is the only one of its kind in the UK. Furthermore, because it

can only provide space to fifteen young mothers at any given time, the project is unable to address the educational needs of most young mothers in Edinburgh. Nevertheless, rather than fully exploring the possibility of piloting this project in Scottish communities that are similar to Wester Hailes, it appears that the Scottish Executive has chosen to overlook this avenue as viable option for increasing young mothers' inclusion in education. This echoes my earlier argument about the need for further inquiry into the ways the educational institutions can support pregnant teenagers and young mothers in making informed, and supported, decisions regarding their future in education in addition to increasing their inclusion in education during their pregnancy and after they give birth.

Discussion

The young mothers experiences of sexual health education indicate that there is a lack of information and discussion time dedicated to issues other than preventing pregnancy and STIs through the use of contraception or abstinence. At the same time, Currie et al's (1999) follow-up of their 1990 study on the sexual health of Scottish schoolchildren demonstrates that there has been an increase in classroom discussion in the area of personal relationships, sexual development, sexual intercourse, pregnancy and AIDS/STIs. However, it is difficult to get detailed information about the content of these discussions. Furthermore, sex education tends to focus more on the biological and legal aspects of sexual behaviour and therefore rarely, if at all, addresses issues such as confidence and self-esteem (SEU,1999a), suggesting that sexual health education is most often 'concerned with the consequences of sexual activity such as teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted

diseases' (Monk, 1998:241). This presents a conflict between repressing and regulating child sexuality and/or sexual behaviour within sexual health education and policy that hinders the further development of these programmes to include other meaningful aspects of sexual and gender relations. As a result, a number of important issues that are relevant to young women, such as self-esteem, gender relations, violence, and parenting to name but a few, may be omitted within sexual health education and policy. Hence, echoing Holland et al's (1991) argument that until such time as topic of 'violence in relationships' is viewed as an integral part of sex education within the school curriculum, it appears that knowledge of birth control and safer sex practices will have little impact on preventing pregnancy in instances where women do not have the power to negotiate the practice of safer sex.

Sexual Health Education: Inclusion experienced as Exclusion

This study has demonstrated, throughout the potential part that young mothers have to play in contributing to the development and provision of sexual health education. This has been evidenced in research that has shown the enjoyment they have in sharing their experiences of motherhood (Kidger, 2000), in addition to my own observations of the young mothers' participation in developing their own peer education project. However, I have also observed how when young mothers try to become providers of informal education, they sometimes encounter barriers to sharing their experiences with other young people in formal and informal educational settings. In addition, young mothers who are willing to share their experiences are also excluded from political consultation processes where their experiences could in fact be used to inform appropriate policy and social services.

The exclusion of young mothers from the delivery of sexual health programmes as both community educators and as policy consultants, became increasingly clear upon observing the young mothers' failed attempts at participating in the 'Healthy Respect Project'²¹ in Edinburgh and the Lothians. This is perhaps most clearly reflected through Veronica's experience of being invited to speak to young people about being a young mother at the launch:

'There was a guy that came in (to Stepping Stones) from the 'Healthy Respect Campaign', and he was like asking us our opinions on sex, teenage pregnancy, on how they should have more awareness about the Brook²² and condoms, that sorta thing...so we went there to launch it but after that it was, they really just used us for the publicity...he says that he could get us into the schools and things like that to talk to the girls and boys to like give them our views sorta thing and they never actually got back to us at all.'

As such, what was initially thought to be a potentially empowering experience for Veronica, ultimately resulted in her feeling angry and used. Hence, even if this is not the experience of a young mother herself, she continues to be held up as an example of the negative consequences associated with teenage pregnancy. As Veronica demonstrates, this generally occurs within someone else's agenda, and one in which young mothers are not asked to contribute to even at their own request. This experience was further confirmed when I supported one of the other young mothers at the launch to approach one of the launch organisers about the possibility of supporting the young mothers in participating in the 'Healthy Respect' Project. Our query was met with a laugh and we were told 'don't put the horse before the cart

²¹ The Scottish Executive has provided three million pounds to fund the 'Healthy Respect' project in order to decrease teenage pregnancy and STIs through working in partnership with statutory and voluntary organisations in Edinburgh and the Lothians.

²² The Brook is a national sexual health service organisation that is promoted as a service that is both

dear'. These experiences are particularly interesting in that they demonstrate how young mothers can be simultaneously included and excluded from sexual health education. Hence, although the young mothers were invited to share their experiences of pregnancy and motherhood, it was under the condition that the purpose of this would be to somehow convince young people of the dire consequences of sexual deviancy.

Discussion

One glaring issue that appears to have affected all the young mothers who were interviewed for this study is the perception of working-class young women's sexuality. This can be seen through examining mainstream sexual health education provision in the UK that encompasses a 'moral fervour' and pressure to produce young people who, amongst other things, refrain from engaging in 'illicit sexual practices' such as 'promiscuity' (Epstein and Johnson, 1998). By drawing attention to how these 'stigmatized sexual categories' are produced and then policed through schooling, Epstein and Johnson (1998) argue that this is a contributing factor to the current 'moral panic' regarding 'deviant' sexual behaviour. This corresponds with Harding (1998) who has argued that, 'teenage sexuality is represented as problematic in political, moral and medical discourses most especially because of its perceived consequences - notably the spread of disease and pregnancy' (p.117). Consequently, the sexually active young woman, particularly those who are black and/or working-class are often characterized as either 'sexually deviant' or 'problematic'

confidential and sensitive to the needs of young people.

demonstrating how social differences are used to further marginalize and socially exclude young women, pregnant teenagers and young mothers.

The young mothers' narratives regarding sexual health education and services also raises questions about the impact that class may have on the messages young women receive regarding their sexual health. This corresponds with Walkerdine et al (2001), who argue that,

'It seems that the regulation of femininity works quite differently upon the bodies of working- and middle-class girls. Indeed it is the fecund body of the middle-class girl that has to be regulated at all costs in favour of the predominance of the mind...on the other hand the fecund body of the working-class girl does not represent a threat to bourgeois masculinity but rather contributes to a discourse on welfare scroungers' (p.188).

This suggests that there are two different sets of messages at play in society when it comes to approaching the sexual health of middle and working class young women. The first message is about protecting young women. This message operates under the assumption that sexual health education strategies occurring in schools and community projects are the route to take in protecting the sexual health of middle class girls in the view that they will have children 'later but not now'. In addition, it is also about promoting alternatives to motherhood. However, this approach is only going to be 'heard' by middle class teenagers who believe that their sexual health is worth protecting. Moreover, it also assumes that all young women feel that they need to be protected from pregnancy because they can see this as protecting their future, that being a future that will at some point includes both a career and children. The second message, however, is about protecting the state and is therefore directed at working-class or poor young women. The message here is that young women need to protect themselves from getting pregnant so that they will not continue the

cycle of dependency and thus, prevent maintaining a position of reliance on the state for benefit such as income support.

Through highlighting the way in which sex education is delivered in the public sphere of education, it becomes clear that gender, 'race' and class are used to 'other' sexually active young women. At the same time, engaging in sexual activity has traditionally been viewed as a private matter (Woollett and Marshall, 1997), which makes for an obvious contradiction when considered in the context of the moral panic over 'single/young mothers' (Woollett and Marshall, 1997:38). Hence, this analysis confirms the need to provide another view of young, working-class women's sexuality, teenage pregnancy and young motherhood in order to 'publicise' the types of stories that have been told through the interviews with the young mothers in this study.

Social Exclusion in Employment

Discrimination in Employment

The majority of the young mothers in this study who were in paid employment prior to, during, and after their pregnancies, experienced discriminatory working conditions. Liz demonstrates how the process of seeking employment can, in and of itself, be a demoralising experience for young women from socially deprived communities even before they encounter discrimination as a result of their pregnancy or young motherhood status. When I asked her if she thought that young mothers were treated differently to other mothers, she used her experience of seeking employment as a way in which to explain her experience,

'Oh yeh. I think it's depending on where you're staying, there's a lot of differences and it's, there's a lot of differences and I see it myself in job interviews when they ask you where you stay and it's like 'Granton Medway', under your breath you know. I'm not embarrassed about where I stay but it's harder to get jobs if you stay in a really bad area, eh. I mean, I was offered the dental nursing job when I was actually staying at my auntie's, eh, I sorta had a posh address'.

Liz's experiences and beliefs suggests that working-class or poor young mothers often face exclusion from employment even before they become pregnant or become mothers as a result of their working-class or poor background. This corresponds with the argument that one of the factors resulting in young motherhood is working-class or poor young women's social exclusion from employment and education (Wellings et al, 1999).

In addition to experiencing exclusion from employment due to their class or residence, young women may also encounter discrimination from employment as a result of their pregnancy. An example of this is Dionne's experience of being employed on a 'contract' basis that lacked both job security and eligibility for maternity benefit. She worked for a local company when she discovered that she was pregnant. When she reported her pregnancy, she was told that her contract was ending at the end of the summer, although she had previously been led to believe that her contract was going to be renewed:

'I had to tell my work and then they just says my contract was ending at the end of July. They just ended my contract. They said my work wasn't up to scratch and I always had my work done but they says that my contract was ending...when I left, a few month later another girl who started out at the same time as me, she got her contract renewed and she found out she was pregnant and then at the end of that 6 months, she got her contract ended...I would have been happy at that same job even after I had Billy. Even though I'm on my own, I could have still, probably. So between July and January I wasn't working.'

Dionne's example of employment exclusion demonstrates not only the type of working conditions that young women with few qualifications encounter, but the further discrimination experienced as a result of a pregnancy. In addition, the lack of job security and thus eligibility for maternity benefit may also make it difficult for these mothers to find their way back into employment. If one adds the additional costs of childcare to these problems, it may be that most young mothers will choose not to work outside the home since this may make more sense financially. Hence, working-class and poor young women's experience of exclusion from employment becomes exacerbated once they become pregnant, and continues once they have a child to care for.

Another issue that powerfully emerged from the interviews with the young mothers was the exclusion of their needs and experiences within current employment and education policy²³. This was demonstrated through the profound way in which they spoke about their feelings about childcare. For most of the young mothers, taking on employment or education at the time of the interview was not an option for them as they believed that taking care of their children was their duty, as well as being their desire. These 'stories' were told at different times throughout the interview but were most often shared through discussion about their feelings about having left employment or education to have their children. When I asked them about their thoughts on getting involved in employment or education now or in the future or about what they thought was the most important thing to them about being a mother,

²³ It is impossible to discuss employment policy in the UK without including education policy as well since employment policy includes developing re-training or funding educational programmes as one way in which to encourage different groups of people back into the workforce and off benefit. As a result, I will often include the term 'education' when discussing employment policy.

all the women felt that working inside rather than outside the home whilst their children were young, was their main priority. Through a discussion with Karen about her views on mothering and the intentions she may or may not have about re-entering outside employment, Karen explained:

‘As long as you love your children, give them care and understanding and spend time with them, I think that’s more important than the material things. If you love them and they know that you love them then I think things will be fine...I’m never gonnae work again until they’re at school. I just want to spend as much time with them as I can ‘cause I really like it when they’re younger and when they’re off school it’s just harder. So when they’re at school I can do something for myself and it’s not as if I’m using up their time eh, to go out and work ‘cause I can go out to work when they’re at school, when the kids don’t need me.’

Discussion

Karen’s narrative about the relationship between mothering and paid employment outside the home is in strong contrast with competing views that suggest that engaging in employment will, in the long term, be more beneficial to the child (DSS, 1998). Yet, on the surface it appears that Karen is attempting to resist allowing the idea of the ‘good parent’ as being able to provide a child with the material things that only money can buy, to influence her perception of ‘good’ parenting. Rather, Karen strongly asserts that it’s the ‘spending time with them’ that will ensure that ‘everything will be all right’. At the same time, Karen’s defence of her choice to stay at home with her children while they are still young may have, at times, sounded somewhat ‘rehearsed’. This is not surprising considering that, as chair of the Stepping Stones management committee, she has told this story many times before. As such, this may have enabled her to refine and articulate her story upon each

defence. This reflects Goffman's (1959) argument that through one's attempt to demonstrate positive actions that remain mainly overlooked or dismissed by the general public, individuals may express themselves through a 'performance' that will confirm and validate these actions. Furthermore, Goffman (1959) also suggests that the danger of being socialized into constructing this 'performance' may result in the idealization of one's actions and therefore, in barriers to self-improvement. However, what is perhaps more relevant here, are the reasons and the amount of times that Karen has had to defend to her choices, rather than the possibility that she has idealised her identity as a mother. Upon deeper reflection of Karen's narrative what also becomes apparent are the values she has been socialized into and the role her values have played in determining her decision not to pay for someone else to care for her children. This is apparent through Karen's view of employment as 'something for myself' as opposed to something that she would be doing for her children. Consequently, it appears that Karen has put a higher social value on the time and attention that she is providing to her children than working outside the home.

Perceptions of 'Child-Care' and Exclusion from Employment

Although the majority of the young mothers in this study placed a great value in being at home full time, this was not always an option. Dionne, a lone young mother who worked prior to the birth of her son, also shared concerns about the impact that leaving her child in the care of others had on her personally. At the time of the interview, Dionne was grudgingly working two nights a week in a video store to help make ends meet but was also tentatively thinking about going back to college. When

I asked her what was holding her back from applying for a course she stated that even if there was a crèche space available for her son, she wasn't prepared to be away from her son at this stage in his life.

'Em, I'd still want to be with him until about two because like I took him to the woman next door and then when I went up to get him and then she started singing to him you know, but it's like 'oh, I missed that', like I sometimes try to sing to him you know, but it's one thing I missed. But I've always been there for him. I think in a way going away for two hours feels like you could be missing something. Even though I go to the video shop at 6 and he's in his bed for about 7:30/8:00, you know it's only an hour and a half but I'm missing it.'

Emerging from these narratives are indications that caring for one's own children, even at the expense of not engaging in paid employment outside the home, is experienced and viewed as an important and valued occupation. This a particularly powerful observation considering the lack of status attached to motherhood generally and, in particular, to working-class, young mothers. As a result, these interviews reflect the relationship between their personal values and the politicised issue of child-care. However, in attempting to place a higher value on being a full-time, stay-at-home mother what becomes even more interesting are the covert ways in which these young mothers have demonstrated an engagement in acts of resistance against the middle-class values reflected in social policy practice. This has been achieved through 'othering' women who choose to put that child in the care of (an)other so that they can continue with their public life and through stating that in their opinion, staying at home with a child may be more beneficial to a child's development.

Becoming pregnant and choosing to become a mother had an impact on the majority of the young mothers' ability or desire to continue with paid employment while their children were still very young. Articulating this point, Jenna illustrates how

motherhood resulted in a shift in her feelings about engaging in paid employment and the impact that this has had on her feelings and decisions about childcare:

‘My life’s changed a lot. I used to be in hairdressing so I lost my career ‘cause I’ve never went back to it ‘cause I’m scared to put Chloe in a crèche where I’m not there while she is. Ken it’s all right at Stepping Stones and that’s ‘cause its like she’s only through the back... Just the way I think now, ken, it’s a lot different from what I used to think. Now its not just me on my own, its like, what will I get for Chloe, its just things like that. Its just different now, I’ve got different views on different things and on things that I never had before...like paedophiles and things like that.’

Like many parents, there are a number of factors that have influenced Jenna’s decision not to return to working outside the home the most powerful of which was the way in which becoming a mother impacted on decisions that she made prior to the birth of her child. As Jenna has stated, she had originally thought that she would go back to work after the birth of her daughter, however, once Chleo was born, Jenna’s identity shifted from seeing herself as a young woman to seeing herself as a young mother. Consequently, the transition to motherhood has had an impact on her view of the world around her, a world in which she needs to ensure the protection of her daughter. For Jenna, as with the other young mothers in this study, this was perhaps due to her disbelief that someone outside the family²⁴ could feel the same responsibility toward the care of the child.

This is an important issue in understanding working-class values about mothering and caring since, in contrast to middle-class women, when the young mothers in this study needed support with caring for their children, they most often relied on informal care as opposed to formal or paid care. In line with findings from the previous chapter, this reliance on family support appears to be part of their

socialization in that, as demonstrated earlier, the young mothers themselves supported their own mothers in caring for siblings or grandparents. For Jenna, however, the value and desire she attaches to being at home with her daughter full time appears to be influenced by her views about what being a mother entails such as providing ongoing protection from the outside world. However, upon further reflection on the value that both Jenna and her peers attach to being a 'stay-at-home' mother, Jenna's decision may also have been influenced by her perception of what it means to be a 'good' mother. This corresponds with earlier arguments about the impact that expressing oneself through performance – in this case, the role of the 'good mother' has on one's education or employment decisions (Goffman, 1959).

Although the decision not to work or study outside the home in order to provide full-time care to their children was made and supported by all the young mothers in this study, this was still a difficult decision to make. This was because most of the women were well aware of the pressure the government has put on them to work outside the home or to enter some form of further education. This has resulted in some of the young mothers feeling that in light of these policies or views encountered by social service professionals, they need to defend their decisions to stay at home with their children. This was most poignantly illustrated through my interview with Lorna:

'...Sometimes I say to myself, OK, you're 21, you've got no job, I'm staying here, I mean look at me ken, and now I'm getting up to the stage where I'm thinking to myself, right, she's coming up for 2 and I need to get my head screwed on and not be like half the people here, not be like half the people at nursery (stepping stones), no disrespect to them, but I dinnae want te end like them. I wanna get a job, I've been to college, I've got qualifications, you ken what I mean? I'm not

²⁴ The term 'family' in this context encompasses the nuclear family as well the as the mothers' family of origin with specific reference to the maternal grandmother.

the brightest person, no the stupidest person, so I wanna eh, so I want her in a nursery and I want her when she's bigger to say at least my mummy done that for me, at least my mummy ken, I wanna buy her like extra things...I'll go without before she goes without...some people in my family are saying we're willing to watch her if you're wanting to go out and get a job but the only part that is stopping me from getting a job is Annie because I been away fae her for like a night out with my pals but I cannae see myself taking her somewhere in the morning, finishing work at night, picking her up, bringing her home, giving her tea, then its going to be basically time for her bath and her bed and that's not really very much time to spend with her, ken what I mean? I mean its no, 'cause she never sees her dad, she has to have one of us here to see her all the time so that persons got to be me.'

Lorna demonstrates two striking issues. First, the story that she has shared reveals the complexity that exists in the lives on young mothers desperate to fulfil the role of the 'good mother'. Laura, like most women today, has assimilated two competing notions of the 'good mother' of which one is the view that working outside the home or being educated makes you a better parent and of which the other is that mothers should be at home to care for their children full time. Second, Lorna's struggle is also indicative of the way in which social policies form social values that result in feelings of inadequacy for those people who deviate from the suggested 'norm'. As a result of this process, young mothers like Lorna experience social exclusion in two ways. First, their values are not taken into consideration when developing social policy and service provision; and second, their parenting is devalued because they choose to be 'stay-at-home' mothers.

As I have already stated, most of the young mothers in this study were in some type of employment or training prior to becoming pregnant and continue to have plans to return once their children are in full time education. Although these young women may have had different experiences of work and education, they share one common

belief, that being that going to work or college is something that will always be there for them, whereas fulfilling one's responsibility as a mother may not. Consequently, making the choice to have a child is also making the choice to focus on being a full time mother. At the same time, this choice is not without its consequences when one considers the social and political pressure that is put upon young and lone mothers to participate in paid employment or engage in some type of job training programme. For the young mothers in this study choosing to have a child at a young age and then choosing not to work outside the home or attend college has resulted in contrasting experiences. For Karen, Ally and Jenna, choosing to stay at home with their children until they are in school full time demonstrates an act of resistance toward the dominant political and social discourse about young and lone motherhood in the UK. However, as in Lorna's case, struggling with the complex and multitudinous views of what it means to be a 'good mother' has resulted in feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt. As such, exclusion from employment in the context of the lives of the young mothers in this study is not merely about the barriers to employment or the adverse working conditions they often find themselves in. Rather, what has emerged as being more central to the lives of these young mothers is the omission of their opinions, values, and experiences as mothers within social and political discourses that results in the act of social exclusion.

Discussion

As I have suggested earlier, the decision that these young mothers have made to stay at home with their children is hardly surprising in light of their socialization into caring and the value attached to being a stay-at-home mother. However, it appears

that these values are marginalised when attached to the lives of working-class or poor women even though, as Ribbens (1994) has found, when it comes to the care of one's child, the use of paid childminder is rarely an acceptable choice for any mother regardless of her class positioning. Yet, the fact that these women have chosen to stay at home with their children has resulted in their experiences of social exclusion because in New Labour terms, 'the antidote to exclusion...is to be found in the operation of the labour market' (Batsleer and Humphries, 2000:4) and to ensure that all those who they deem capable of engaging in paid work outside the home will do so.

Since one of the main barriers to employment or education is affordable childcare services the Labour government has attempted to encourage lone parents to access welfare programmes that include childcare grants such as through the NDLP and the LPCCG. However, there are two important issues that I have identified from the interviews with the young mothers, which have not been taken into consideration in the development of these incentives. First, the New Deal, or other policies and programmes similar to them, do not address working conditions or the type of work that young mothers are employed to do. As discussed earlier, many of the young women I interviewed were working in low paid positions without job security or a pension or maternity benefit. Second, and more importantly to the mothers in this study, the New Deal does not address the social needs and economic issues facing young mothers specifically in addition to the needs of mothers on income support who have children under the age of 5. Furthermore, the New Deal and the LPCCF also ignores the fact that even when their children are in full time education, many young mothers are not prepared to work or return to education when their children

are not in school, calling for the need for employment that takes place during school hours. As suggested by Piachaud and Sutherland (2002),

‘The promotion of paid work is not only a matter of financial incentives: it also involves childcare, transport, and working hours. The difficulties and stress - impinging on both parents and children - that result from combining paid work and the care and upbringing of children will only be marginally affected by measures taken thus far to promote family-friendly employment’ (p.153-154).

These issues go far beyond the scope of this study. However, it is important to note that for the young mothers in this study, while these types of policies do not guarantee the lifting of a household from poverty, they do ensure that parents will have less time to spend with their children (McKnight, 2002). Consequently, the NDLP will not be perceived as making the choice between work and benefit, but rather, it is about making a choice between work outside or inside the home.

As I have demonstrated, the decision not to ‘work’ has implicated young mothers as being ‘bad mothers’ within government policy and programmes due to their unemployment or uneducated status. This perception is contrary to those held by the young mothers themselves who feel that to be a stay-at-home mother until their children are in school full time is the responsible thing to do. Moreover, they feel that this responsibility continues even when their children start school and therefore will only take on paid employment that works around their children’s schedule. It is important to state that this view is held by older mothers as well as mothers from different classes with working mothers often struggling with their desire or necessity to have a career at the same time as raising a child. Yet, in certain, often more middle-class circles, women who can afford to stay home with their children but who

choose to work outside the home are often condemned for doing so²⁵. Therefore, whilst stay-at-home middle-class mothers are not particularly viewed as being problematic in the eyes of the state, working-class or poor mothers are often labelled as 'social problems' for making the very same choices. Hence, contrary to what employment policies and the social inclusion programmes connected to them lead us to believe, what determines 'good' from 'bad' mothering often depends on the class and/or age of the mother herself rather than a woman's education and employment status. As such, young mothers (as well as lone mothers) are excluded within 'welfare to work' social policies and programmes, will also maintain undertones of gender discrimination in that they do not recognise 'mothering' as a form of valuable and notable work. This has been an ever-present theme emerging from this research and one that will be discussed further in later chapters.

Social Exclusion and Support Services

As I have already stated, although there is increasing support aimed at the prevention of teenage pregnancy, there is little if any support for young people once they become pregnant. Consequently, what follows is an analysis and discussion of the ways in which the young mothers in this study were excluded from housing, health and social services.

²⁵ It must be acknowledged however, that mothers, regardless of their social positioning may experience pressures to either be at home with their child full time or to have a job or career. In fact, discourses focusing on 'working' mothers make this a difficult position for stay-at-home and mothers who take on paid employment outside the home. This is in part due to terms such as 'full-time' mothers which are used to characterize mothers who do not work outside the home but which diminishes the mothering/caring emotions and responsibilities that 'working' mothers do. Equally, by using terms like 'working' mothers who both mother and engage in paid work outside the home, diminishes the 'work' that stay-at-home mothers engage in.

Exclusion and Housing

A common theme that emerged in the interviews was the young mothers' experience of barriers to obtaining appropriate housing. Moreover, their interactions with housing officers often exacerbated feelings of demoralisation as a result of experiencing a sense of being judged on their working-class, sometimes 'black', young mother status. My study supports the view that single parents, especially single mothers, are largely dependent on local authorities for their housing (Watson, 1999) and that concentrations of single mothers in certain areas develop as a result of housing policy, rather than the 'contaminating' cultural influences of the poor (Morris, 1994). As will be illustrated, other issues such as attitudes to age, 'race' and class within housing policy and practice have also contributed to the social exclusion of young mothers.

Regardless of whether or not a young mother was on a waiting list for housing or already living in a council house or accommodation provided by a housing association, many of the young mothers whom I interviewed shared feelings of disempowerment through their interactions with housing officers. As Karen stated,

'The council as a whole, they just think that you're useless, in the way that they talk to you and treat you just because you live in Granton and you don't have any feelings an' shouldn't be put anywhere nice...I think sometimes people think that you're immature because you've had your kids young as um, compared to someone in their 30s or 40s and just had their kids and went up to the council or something, they would be treated a lot better. I think we get pushed aside a wee bit cause people think we're too young to deal with all of this. And then you end up feeling really bad because you know not everyone is immature just because they had their kids young.'

Consequently, applying for, receiving and maintaining a home can be a difficult and often discouraging process. For Nicki, applying for a house turned into a

demoralising experience when she found out that she was too young to apply for a tenancy in her own right:

‘When I was first pregnant my mum was still claiming income support for me and she was trying to find out when she should stop claiming it and for me to start claiming it and then she had phoned and when she came off the phone, she basically got told that I wasn’t entitled to anything at all. If I had left school when I was 16 I would have been entitled to something from social security.’

Hence, Nicki demonstrates the way age is experienced as a barrier to applying for housing for young mothers, disproving claims made by the media and political figures that young women often get pregnant in order to obtain a tenancy of their own.

Ainsley was also denied housing whilst staying in her parents’ home, albeit for different reasons. Ainsley and her three children were living with her parents as a result of her decision to leave her physically abusive partner. When I asked her if it would be possible to get a house for the four of them she replied:

‘Em, not through the Council because they know I’m living with my parents and I’ve got a roof over my head and so I talked to them and they said I’d be lucky if I got a garden shed just now. Those were their exact words.’

Both Nicki’s and Ainsley’s experiences demonstrate the difficulty young mothers have in acquiring their own tenancies. Even in circumstances where a young mother must leave her home in order to escape a violent relationship, tenancies are denied or take years to obtain. It appears that the housing policies and practices make it difficult for many young mothers to live independently of their parents which in turn imply that young mothers are either not deemed ready, able or worthy of maintaining a home of their own.

I also found that racism might have played a part in determining a young mother's experience of housing allocation. At the time I met Karen, a young, black mother of two, she was hoping to move due to harassment she was experiencing from her ex-husband. During this conversation, Karen had alluded to racism she was experiencing through contact with a housing officer and I asked her to expand on how she felt her 'race'/ethnicity had impacted on her housing experiences:

'It was like really bad [the harassment from her ex-husband] 'cause it was like every weekend, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday the police would be there. We just wanted to get into a neighbourhood watch group and we weren't offered a house at the time even after they looked at the police report and the CID report, but you know, I think it was more of a racist thing because the housing officer was extremely racist even though he never said anything directly, but when you're coloured you get to know the underlying comments (laugh) and the way you get treated, but it's like he never said anything directly so you can't put it in a report, you know, you can't get him charged or anything. There's just no point.'

Karen illustrates her belief that racism may act as a barrier to gaining a tenancy in a safe environment through both her direct involvement with a racist housing officer as well as through her inability to feel that she has the necessary 'proof' in which to report her experience of racism to the housing authority. This is not an uncommon experience for as Wainwright (1994) found in her research on the impact of gender and race on housing concerns:

'The policy response of social housing providers to the needs of women and minority ethnic groups in Scotland has been little and late...As well as economic disadvantage, although to some extent inseparable from it, both women and minority ethnic headed households suffer from a lack of equal access to certain forms of housing. Housing providers have largely failed to take account of their needs, forcing them into situations which often exacerbate, rather than relieve the difficulties they are already facing' (p.163).

For Karen, Nicki and Ainsley, as well as for many of the other young mothers in this study, this was certainly the case. Due to the exclusionary practices of the housing officers that these young women experienced, they continue to live in unsafe environments or in confined living spaces.

The attitudes of housing officers was not, however, the main housing issue that the young mothers in this study were concerned about. Of even greater concern was the condition of the housing and neighbourhoods in which they were living. Although this is a concern that may be shared with other people living in communities similar to Greater Pilton, the young mothers specifically connected this issue to their anxiety about providing a safe home environment for their children and their desire to raise them in what they deemed to be a 'decent' community. The young mothers experienced a number of barriers to their attempt to obtain safe housing in a familiar community. For example, once Nicola became eligible to apply for her own tenancy, she found that in order to move to a 'decent' house managed by a housing association in a 'decent' area, she would have to wait for two years. If Nicki were to accept a tenancy from the local Council, she would have had to compromise her values and her needs. Nicki explained her reasons for choosing to wait for a tenancy through the housing association:

'...if I was wanting a house right away I would have to get my mum to write a letter to say that she was throwing me and my little one out so they'd actually give me a house. It would be on a run-down street where there were alcoholics, drug-users walking about the street, kids running about the street swearing and I wasn't wanting that for Susie and my mum said if I was wanting somewhere I could wait, hold-off, wait a couple of year and get a house like what I've got.'

The community that Nicki would have had to live in had she taken a council house paints an accurate picture of the housing situation that nearly all of the women I

interviewed were currently living in. For some of the young women it was even worse.

Donna has been living on the 13th floor of a tower block ever since her 4-year old daughter was born, even though housing policy states that children under 5 years should not live in a flat higher than the 5th floor. Donna has been trying, with the support of her health visitor and social worker, to get moved to a more appropriate tenancy for her and her daughter, but at this point in time, she had not had any progress:

‘Being stuck away up here as I say, in these flats, is totally isolating...the bairn cannae get out to play or anything like, and she’s turning 4 tomorrow, ken what I mean? She should be able to get through to a garden or out somewhere to play for a wee while...when I left Women’s Aid, they referred me to Waterloo Place²⁶ because I was gonnae be homeless but they were offering me Niddrie, Magdalene, Moredun and I just couldn’t survive in somewhere like that, I need my family ‘round me, I’m not asking for anything special, I’m asking for just, I would even stay in these flats if they just put me lower down. Like Carrie climbs up to these windaes all the time and not all of them lock and if she fell she wouldn’t have a chance. So I’m constantly on her back, ‘Carrie, get down from the windae, get down from the windae’. And the kitchen ones, they pull right out like doors, so it’s totally terrible and it’s just like they’re not willing to help at all.’

Donna was put into the position of having to choose between living in improved housing in a community where she would feel isolated or to stay in what she considered to be a very poor housing situation in a community where she had familial support²⁷. Hence, in order for Donna to be able to stay in a community where she would be able to access the support of her family she had to accept the fact the she would be living in accommodation that was inappropriate and unsafe for her

²⁶ Waterloo Place is where the City of Edinburgh Department of Housing Headquarters is situated.

²⁷ I interviewed Donna on two separate occasions. Her tenement building was supposed to be monitored by a servitor however, on both occasions the lock on the main entrance was broken and there was no servitor on staff. In addition, Donna had been waiting several weeks for her toilet to get

and her daughter. This experience corresponds with research that has argued that it is not an uncommon occurrence for working-class or poor, young mothers to be forced to compromise between accommodation and neighbourhood when applying for council housing (Speak et al 1995).

As I have shown, there are two inter-related reasons why the young mothers found themselves living in housing schemes that provided poor living conditions. First, they were rarely if ever, offered housing that was more suitable than their current accommodation, and second, even if they were not living in the most ideal circumstances, they were prepared to do so in order to stay close to their immediate families. This is not surprising since, as I have illustrated earlier, their families were either their only or most consistent form of emotional support. However, there were a number of women in this study who stated that if they had the opportunity, they would move to a different area if it were a middle-class neighbourhood. As Liz explained,

‘The reason that I stay here, this what you would call a deprived area really, it’s full of single mothers, it’s single mothers, young mothers, and it’s also bringing up your kids, I’d rather bring up my kids in Morningside if I had the financial means of doing it than Granton...It’s a better area and there’s less violence, like seeing it on your streets. You’ve got no rubbish lying everywhere and graffiti all over the walls and there’s no any big gang of youths, you know, hanging out at the chippy [chip shop] at night and there’s a lot less violence going on in sorta better areas and the police take more notice if you stay in a place like Morningside than they do in Granton Medway’.

Liz also seemed to think that if she were a single, young mother living in a more middle-class area, society’s perception of her and other young mothers would be different:

fixed. Again, the toilet had not been fixed on either occasion when I went to interview her.

‘Em, the difference in the treatment, in being a young mother staying in Granton, you think the typical wee tart basically ‘cause it all depends on the population of single mothers, where they’re sitting and Muirhouse, Pilton and Granton, that’s where you get the majority of single mothers in Edinburgh, it’s all down in this area so em, being a young mother in Granton, they’re more likely to look down on you as a typical wee tart whose had a one night stand and is a single parent or whatever’.

This view corresponds with earlier observations made by Lisa that young mothers appear to live in the same or similar low-income communities. When I asked why she thought that was, she replied:

‘Em, maybe it’s because we’re all stuck here, we’re not given the chance to have a nice house and likes I’ve seen some couples, older couples who are 30 odd, not judging them or anything, they’ve got a nice house uptown, whereas I grew up in the worst part of Granton, the most schemiest, scummiest part of Granton, I’m like well, I’ve got no choice, well, I think I’ve got a choice. I’m gonna be a mother. That’s the kind of view that I’m hearing, no that you’re an individual who can be given a chance to have a nice house in a nice area and get a nice fresh start. You’re not given that because you’re being stereotyped as a young mother. You’re gonnae have wild parties in the middle of the night just because you’re a young mother, you’re gonnae neglect your bairn...but because you’re a young mother you’re being stereotyped’.

Lisa’s perception that stereotypes about young mothers result in the allocation of housing within socially deprived communities reflects the view of a number of the young mothers interviewed for this study. This has resulted in feelings of frustration and also fear for the young mothers who live in these areas. As Stella proclaimed, ‘...you never know what’s gonnae happen next. A couple of days ago it was a fight with baseball bats...I don’t want to stay here, I don’t want him (her son) being brought up seeing that’. As a result Stella is about to apply for a different area to live. Yet, as with all the other mothers in this study, it is more than likely than any move she is offered, will be in a community very similar to the one she is currently living in.

Finally, regardless of the numerous negative experiences that the young mothers identified regarding housing issues, many of the young mothers also identified one recurring positive aspect of living on a council housing scheme. Many of the young mothers felt that their position as a young mother was more accepted in an area like Pilton, Muirhouse or Granton than if they were a young mother in a wealthier community. As Anna stated, 'I think you would be more of an outcast if you came from a middle-class area. It's more common if you come from Muirhouse or Pilton'. Hence, for many of the young mothers, living in this community, albeit a neighbourhood that is comprised of poor housing, the sense that their choice to be a young mother was more accepted there than in other parts Edinburgh was sometimes enough of a reason to want to stay.

Another powerful explanation for wanting to stay in this community was put forth by Vonnie through her account of her experience of living in Pilton:

'I've lived in Royston and Wardieburn and here (Pilton), but because I was bring up in this area I know them all...so I'm more comfortable in Pilton than anywhere else and every bairn that walks up and down the street, I guarantee I know their name. And they speak to you. And even if they're making lots of noise and you shout out the windae they'll come up to your windae and apologize...they're no that bad. They're only bad when they're getting into stealing the cars, things like that, em, vandalising, sometimes they're cutting the wires of the lamp posts, and cutting the lights in the drive, things like that, stupid wee things eh. Some things you just laugh at but...to me it's just a waste of time to try to clean it the area up. Its just going down hill and down hill and down hill.... (but) this has been a good place, it's a good stair and the neighbours are brilliant...'

Consequently, Vonnie's expression of her contentment with living in Pilton was rooted in the history and familiarity she had with the community. As illustrated previously, many of the young mothers in this study stated that it was important for them to live near their families in addition to their articulating powerful statements

about 'living here all my life'. These stories allude to the possibility that even in the event that many young mothers are forced to live in less than desirable housing situations, for them, 'choosing' to live in what they believe to be an emotionally supported community becomes a higher priority than living in an area where they might access environmentally safer living conditions. As such, this further supports the notion that young mothers will often be in a position of having to compromise their physical safety for a community that feels familiar.

Discussion

The findings highlight the ways in which young mothers may feel 'judged' by their communities. For black young mothers, racism may also be an additional factor in their experience of social exclusion with regard to housing. Thus young mothers' experiences are partially determined through housing policy, but may also be due to the ways in which housing policies are interpreted and controlled by the gatekeepers of these services, which can result in the 'ghettoization' of young motherhood. This is further exacerbated by the fact that most young mothers have very little, if any, information about welfare benefits and entitlements and the housing system in general at the time of their pregnancy (Clark, 1989). Consequently, this situates young mothers in a position of powerlessness whereby they are entirely dependent on a social worker or housing officer to pursue their cases. This often means that young mothers have little choice in determining the community in which they can raise their children. Moreover, it also appears that even in situations where a young mother is educated about her rights or options, discriminatory service providers may use their power as gatekeepers to determine their housing options.

There have been a number of changes within Britain's housing sector over the past 25 years. The Conservative government's (1979-1997) commitment to the sale of local authority housing stock resulted in a decrease in council housing from 31.4% to 18.9% between 1975 and 1995 (Ginsburg in Adams, 2002). In more recent times, this has resulted in extremely long waiting lists for people wishing to occupy council housing. This has become a particularly significant issue for lone parents and their children and ethnic minorities who are recognised as being the most likely group to occupy council housing and housing association accommodation (Adams, 2002). In Scotland, most of this type of housing is located on the periphery of cities in areas often termed 'housing schemes' that segregate economically and socially deprived communities. In fact, a number of the young mothers often referred to themselves or other people living in their community as 'schemiest' as the quote from Stella has illustrated.

Yet, these communities are a far cry from what was to be their original purpose during construction. As Hill (2000) states, 'Most fundamentally, it is disturbing that council housing which was conceived as housing 'for the working classes', or even 'for everyone' in a brief utopian dream in the 1940's, is now increasingly seen, like the comparable sector in the USA, as welfare housing, where the 'dangerous poor' are segregated and need to be contained' (p.245). Although the housing Green Paper (DETR, 2000) has acknowledged widespread housing problems and in turn, advocated measures to improve these standards, there still remains the issue of segregation. As noted by Lupton and Power (2002),

'Poor neighbourhoods are, in a sense, barometers for social exclusion. They illustrate sharply the more general problems of social division,

inequality, and lack of opportunity in society...illuminating the processes and consequences of spatial segregation, demonstrating how the concentration of the most disadvantaged people living in the areas with the worst intrinsic problems compounds the difficulties that individuals already face, promoting exclusion and inhibiting inclusion' (p.140).

This is echoed by Adams (2002) who notes that, 'One test of an inclusive society is the openness of more privileged residents to migrants settling from minority, stigmatised populations' (p.83). Nevertheless, the segregation of young mothers continues even though New Labour has made a commitment to create better housing conditions. One example of this can be seen in the Social Inclusion Unit's policy of providing housing for homeless mothers through hostel accommodation and including the offer of help and advice in order to enable them to move into more permanent accommodation and training to work. As Levitas (1998) suggests, although this may appear appropriate under a number of different types of government policies, encouraging young mothers into such institutions is a potentially exclusionary principle in that it fails to acknowledge that not all young mothers would welcome or benefit from this type of solution. In addition, this type of service provision may also result in maintaining a climate of social control in that it positions young mothers under the monitoring and supervision of the state. As such, this reflects the notion that all young mothers have the same needs whilst contributing to the development of yet another 'ghetto', albeit under a different roof.

It is important to note that it is not only housing policy and practice that maintain the 'ghettoization' of young mothers. As I have already discussed, young mothers believe, either through their own experience or through hearing about the experiences of others, that young motherhood is a stigmatised position in society and

that, in turn, often influences their decision to 'ghettoize' themselves. Furthermore, when young mothers are offered immediate tenancies in communities in which they do not feel any familial connection or available supports, they choose to live in less than ideal conditions. This suggests that some young mothers who are offered a tenancy in more middle-class communities will not necessarily jump at the chance to move there. As a result, developing housing in less deprived communities must also mean ensuring that supports for young mothers are available, such as the provision of community resources aimed at both them and their children. However, until such time as marginalised groups of people such as young mothers are provided with the opportunity to make a home for themselves in a variety of communities, the perception of working-class young mothers as a social problem will go unchallenged. Consequently, this will continue to result in the ghettoization of young mothers by both the state and young mothers themselves.

Exclusion from health services

Research suggests that exclusion from services are initially experienced by young mothers during their pregnancy in that they rarely, if ever, access support at this time. Even when young mothers are encouraged to engage in some form of group work, they rarely participate due to feeling intimidated by the idea of this experience (Speak et al, 1995). This corresponds to the experiences of one of the community workers that I interviewed whom, was employed to provide antenatal services to marginalised women including very young pregnant teenagers, through funding from the 'Sure Start Scotland' programme²⁸. However, even when young women did

²⁸Sure Start Scotland provides broad based support for families with very young children. The aim is to expand the availability of support focusing on more deprived communities and vulnerable families.

accept support through antenatal services, they continued to feel as if their needs as young mothers were ignored. When I asked Lisa what kind of support she received around her pregnancy she talked a lot about the support she received from her parents and partner. Yet, when I asked her about the other kinds of support she received, she stated that she the only support she had experienced was through Stepping Stones. Moreover, Leanne's knowledge about Stepping Stones was gained through a friend and not through her midwife, even though midwives in the Greater Pilton are knowledgeable about the services offered at Stepping Stones and are regularly requested to pass that onto the pregnant teenagers and young mothers that they come into contact with. Exclusion from health services occurred at the time of delivery and post-natal, as Veronica relates:

'When I had Nicky, and I had never taken any drugs or anything, so I had been in a lot of pain sort of thing, when I asked the nurse, she was older, may 45 or 50, when I asked her how I would get to the shower room she said, 'you get up and walk like every other mother has to do here'...that was the only person that ever treated me differently...she looked at me as if to think, you stupid little girl.'

Moreover, in my interview with Lorna, she stated that she had received little, if not any, information about the midwifery services available. This was particularly significant for Liz who always seemed particularly proud of her decision to breast feed and was very disappointed that her midwife failed to tell her about the availability of a local breastfeeding group.

These examples demonstrate that not only do young mothers feel that they are treated differently by health professionals, but that an important part of their experience of exclusion from services occurs through the lack of information and support available to them. These issues suggest that there is a need to further investigate the attitudes

and assumptions of health professionals towards young mothers whilst educating them about the views that young mothers have concerning the care they want to provide for their babies.

Exclusion from community resources

The majority of the young mothers in my study felt that it was important for them to have a resource that was specifically aimed at young mothers. Their most common justification for this was that they felt socially excluded from mainstream resources which they felt were largely attended by women over 25 years of age. Surprisingly, these views were expressed by the most assertive and independently resourceful young mothers whom I interviewed. For example, Liz, a young mother that attended a number of services for women in the community stated that:

‘For younger mothers that are going through depression, like support wise em, like befriending services, I think there needs to be a lot more younger ‘cause I find that more of the people who are doing it are like 25 and older and em, a 16 year old is not going to sit and listen to a 25 year old’s experience ‘cause if someone like me might be able to relate to their experience better and understand what’s going on.’

Liz clearly conveys the importance for some young mothers of peer support from someone near their age in order to provide an atmosphere where they can feel that their experience will be understood. However, Stepping Stones is the only community project that is aimed specifically at young mothers, and this means that provision in other areas is simply not available.

Kat also felt that there was a need for a resource where the focus would be on younger mothers. She stated:

‘I think there is quite a lot of young people falling pregnant, em, and that’s like ken fae 16 upwards, em, I think they should have

something like this (a young parents' resource) because ye dinnae wanna go to a community centre and sit with mothers that are 30 odds when you're like 16 'cause you feel a bit, ken like people are looking down at ye.'

Hence like many of the women in this study, Kat felt that a resource specifically geared toward young mothers would create a space where young mothers would not be judged on the basis of their age.

The issue of age also arose for young women attending statutory social work agencies. When I asked Stella about the support she was receiving from the Children's Centre she felt that although they offered some good parenting courses, her ability to participate in any course was hindered as a result of feeling intimidated by the other mothers as they were older. When I asked her why, she responded:

'I don't know. I still feel like a bairn. In a way, it's like when I come to places like Stepping Stones it's different because it is young mums, it's based on that kind of thing, but here [the Children's Centre] it's mainly older mums who come in and they sorta look at you, its probably just me being paranoid but that's the way I feel when I'm somewhere like this. Or even up town, I do notice that people look at you as if to say, 'well, you're a bit young'. And it's that kind of look.'

Stella identifies that whether or not young mothers are in all actuality being judged on their age, the feeling of being judged still exists. As such, Stella's feelings are similar to those expressed earlier by Kat, in that both women's accounts reflect the pressure these young women are under to appear to be the 'ideal' mother. It also indicates that having a space that is specifically for young mothers helps to normalise young motherhood. This is reflected in Stella's differentiation between the way she feels when she attends Stepping Stones, a voluntary organisation specifically aimed at the need of young mothers, with her experience at the Children's Centre, a statutory social work resource that she has been referred to by her social worker.

Consequently, through stating that she feels judged or paranoid when she 'comes to some place like this (the Children's Centre)' demonstrates the value of services aimed specifically at young mothers.

Donna and Raina, who had also been referred to a local Children's Centre by their social workers, felt that the Children's Centre was more of a place for their children than for themselves. Although there were parenting type groups available to them, all three women felt judged or uncomfortable at the thought of attending them. This was, in part, due to their age, however, considering that their children were referred to the centre as a direct result of a social worker's perception that they were not providing adequate care for their children, it is important to note that these feelings may also be due to the culture of surveillance that overshadows statutory Children's Centres. Thus, these feelings are a common experience for mothers of all ages who are required to bring their children to statutory Children's Centres considering, as Rodgers (1996) states, 'their primary responsibility seems to be to 'treat' women who are failing to fulfil their culturally prescribed motherhood role' (Rodgers, 1996). Since many of these young women are already confronting both covert and overt judgements about their young motherhood status more generally, attending a statutory social work organisation that they feel may also judge them, makes it hardly surprising that these young mothers chose not to become service users for themselves.

Although the majority of the young mothers in this study addressed their need for more provision of services developed with their age in mind, there were a few women who did not mind the idea of 'sharing' services with older mothers. This

appears to be due to their belief that older mothers in this community were also not receiving adequate support. This was, in part, based on the experience of personally knowing an 'older' mother who was in need of support and who appeared not to be able to access a local service. It was also motivated by their own uncertainty and insecurity about what type of service would be available to them once they were too old to attend Stepping Stones. This issue became apparent through one participant observation session that took place during a parent/staff meeting that was used a space in which the parents could bring up any issues or problems they were experiencing with regard to their own or their children's programming.

During this particular meeting, there was a heated debate between some of the young mothers and the staff regarding a 26-year-old mother in need of a support service. This woman, a friend of one the young mothers attending Stepping Stones, had started to come to the project but when it was found out that she was 26, it was explained to her that the project was only funded to provide support to young mothers up until the age of 25. A few of the mothers were very upset by this as the woman was a friend of theirs and was seemingly in need of some type of support. The staff at the project explained the reasons for having to direct the woman to another resource, but the young mothers involved in this debate were feeling very angry about the 'injustice' of the project refusing her a service. What arose from this discussion was that two of the young mums were coming up for 25 and were becoming increasingly anxious about not being able to attend the project. 'What would they do? Where would they go?' When I asked Karen, who had recently turned 23, if she thought there were enough resources for young mothers in the community, her response conveyed this anxiety:

‘No, there probably should be more em, it would be nice to have one to go to once you can’t go to Stepping Stones anymore. I still have one more year left. But there is ‘Muirhouse under Twos’, it doesn’t matter how old the mother is as long as your child is under two, and Stepping Stones it doesn’t matter how old your child is as long as you’re under 25, but if you’re over 25 and your kids aren’t under 2, where do you go? There’s nothing.’

The concern that the young mothers have regarding the lack of resources available to ‘older’ mothers highlights yet another reason why they feel the need to attend a project aimed specifically at young mothers. All the young mothers attending Stepping Stones identified it as a place in which they have been supported and encouraged to gain the confidence and skills that will assist them in developing and maintaining long-term goals. These included hiring tutors from outside organisations that provide a range of courses that can be used toward a college diploma, to learning a skill such as computing or homeopathy, in addition to ‘in-house’ group work on parenting, confidence building and peer education all within a space where they did not feel judged on their age.

Discussion

As I have illustrated, three factors contribute to the experience of social inclusion within community services for young mothers. These include an atmosphere in which the young mothers do not feel judged on their age, a place where they can go to in order to engage in some type of learning, group work or activity and a place in which they can gain long term life skills that will be useful once they make the transition from what they define as ‘young motherhood’ to ‘older motherhood’. However, as has been demonstrated, there continues to be a lack of recognition of this need on the part of both health and social workers, as well as through policies

impacting on resources that are to be funded with regard to supporting young mothers.

Conclusion

This chapter suggests that current political strategies, social policies and services reflect a view of teenage pregnancy and young motherhood as a social problem that exacerbates rather than alleviates their experiences of social exclusion. This has been reflected through the young mothers' experiences of social exclusion with regard to education, employment, housing and social service programmes and practices, supporting earlier arguments that teenage pregnancy and young motherhood are treated as social, moral and economic issues. These social and moral messages are reinforced through the increase in sexual health education and sexual health service funding and through education, training, and employment programmes. It also appears that all these areas of practice are maintained by housing, health and social service professionals who often monitor rather than support young mothers with their parenting²⁹.

In attempting to view young women from working-class or poor backgrounds as victims of their socio-economic circumstances, there is also a failure to go beyond middle-class assumptions about the values of working-class young mothers. This is highlighted through social and political reports which argue that decreasing teenage pregnancy will result in an increase in the labour market participation of young women, and that this increase in paid employment will decrease the experience of

²⁹ There may be many reasons for why health and social service professionals engage in the business of monitoring the behaviour of young mothers. Examining these reasons go well beyond the scope of this research however, for further insight into these issues see Rutman et al (2002) who have

social inclusion (SEU, 1999a, SEU, 1999b, Scottish Office, 1999a, Scottish Executive, 2001). These documents have resulted in the funding of social exclusion/inclusion initiatives aimed at reducing teenage pregnancy through increasing sexual health education in the schools and community based demonstration projects like the 'Healthy Respect' in Scotland, whilst at the same time, funding education and employment training programmes such as 'Bridging the Gap' and through providing child care grants to lone parents through programmes like the Scottish Executive funded LPCCG. Although the New Labour government has acknowledged that they have a key role to play in changing the socio-economic circumstances that contribute to teenage pregnancy, and in providing the necessary supports that will enable young and lone mothers to access education, training and employment, the young mothers experiences from this study indicate that for them, these types of programmes will have little impact on their experiences of social inclusion. This is because of the lack of attention paid to the wide range of sexual health issues effecting working-class young women and the thoughts and the values that they hold with regard to pregnancy, young motherhood, and caring.

As I have argued, attempting to decrease the social exclusion of working-class young women and mothers through putting in place social welfare programmes that are aimed at increasing their participation in the labour force, ignores the values and experiences attached their roles as mothers. Consequently, this results in the devaluing of their choice to stay-at-home and to organise their time around the needs of their children. In turn, this also devalues the work that goes into mothering and caring more generally. Hence, programmes such as Bridging the Gap or the NDLP

thoroughly examined the attitudes and experiences of social workers working with young mothers in

encourage young mothers to shift their focus from mothering to education or paid employment at a time when they are unlikely to take up this opportunity. This highlights another important issue, which has emerged from the young mothers interviews, that being, that the majority of the young mothers stated that they did have plans to re-enter education or the paid work force, once their children 'did not need them as much'. This corresponds with research which indicates that teenage mothers continue to enrol in education in their 30's, and for those who finished high school prior to having a child, often achieve one or more years of college education (Rich and Kim, 1999). This suggests that what may be of more welcome to young mothers is the development of policies and programmes that could be aimed at supporting them in their parenting, particularly in light of their longer term education and employment ambitions. At the same time, however, many of the young mothers did participate in education and training programmes when they were offered at Stepping Stones or through a nearby resource that enabled the young mothers to leave their child at the Stepping Stones nursery. This suggests that a key factor involved in the inclusion of young mothers in education and training programmes may be to offer these programmes on the premises of a community resource that they are already accessing or one that is local to them, and that includes on site child care provision.

The social exclusion of young mothers also appears to be a result of the type of housing, health and social services they receive. Housing proved to be a particularly important issue for the young mothers in this study, in that it not only had the potential to effect their own social and emotional needs, but also what they viewed as effecting the health and safety needs of their children. However, a number of the

young mothers felt that they had very little choice of where to live if they viewed their need to live in a community where social and emotional supports for them and their children existed. As such, feeling physically safe was often less of a priority than social and emotional 'safety'. The young mothers' experiences with housing correspond with Bill Jordan's (1996) distinction between 'communities of choice' and 'communities of fate'. 'Communities of choice' are based on 'household strategies for income security and utility associated with comfortable, convenient healthy and status-giving private environments' (p.186-7), whereas residents living in 'communities of fate' are 'bound into long-term interdependencies because of their lack of opportunities to move, gain access to good education or health care, get decently paid formal work or share in the cultural resources of the mainstream society' (p.187). Hence, the young mothers' 'fated' housing experiences provide yet another example of their exclusion from mainstream society.

The young mother's relationship with her midwife or health visitor was sometimes perceived as disappointing since this was, for some young mothers, the only contact they had with a professional. As such, this made them incredibly dependent on them for information and support, which at times went beyond the health professional's remit. However, midwives and health visitors may not always have updated information about housing or other welfare benefits, which suggests that there is a need for stronger links between health and social services. Although 'working-together'³⁰ strategies have been developed in order to ensure that information and knowledge about emotional and financial support are provided to young mothers

³⁰ This refers to the number of 'working together' strategies developed through the Labour government both nationally and in Scotland. It includes the working together or statutory and voluntary organisation 'working together' to decrease social exclusion in a number of areas such as

before and after they give birth, the young mothers have demonstrated how this does not always happen. Finally, there also appears to be a general lack of awareness about what is available to young mothers in the community. Stepping Stones is the only young parents project in this community and staff from that project state that they continually provide information about their services to local statutory social work agencies, GP surgeries and midwifery/health visiting teams and other voluntary organisation in the community. However, three of the young women interviewed for this research had never heard of Stepping Stones and, of the young women who were attending Stepping Stones, the majority knew about this project through friends or family. There were however, a number of young mothers who were aware of other local services aimed at mothers of all ages. Some of the young mothers saw the benefit of sharing experiences with 'older' mothers, whilst others were more wary of being judged by these very same women. However, the majority of the young mothers felt that not only was there a lack of service provision aimed at young mothers, but also for all mothers in need support in the Greater Pilton community.

Finally, another important finding emerging from the young mothers' narratives, was the underlying sense that regardless, or perhaps in spite of their experiences of social exclusion, was the way in which they attempted to resist dominant, oppressive discourses about mothering. This can be seen through the various ways in which they juxtaposed their decision to remain 'beside' their children all the time against middle-class women who choose to put their children into someone else's care. At time, this may have appeared 'rehearsed' or defensive, yet this is hardly surprising considering the social pressure they are under to appear to be the ideal mother. This

health and racism.

social pressure seems to have permeated the culture of young motherhood in Greater Pilton as well. This can be seen in the pressure that young mothers who have to work feel about not being home full time. As a result, although living in a community where young mothers are visible, or through attending a project aimed solely at young mothers, being a young mother may for some, be a normalising experience, for others, it may also have its own pressures toward conformity.

Chapter Seven

Young Mothers and Citizenship

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to draw attention to the numerous ways that young mothers participate in society as active citizens through their roles as mothers and members of their local community. Consequently, two arguments will be presented throughout this chapter. First, although young mothers engage in a variety of activities associated with active citizenship, their status as young mothers prevents them from being viewed as active citizens. Second, a key issue in understanding young mothers' exclusion from citizenship is the recognition of the 'paradox of young motherhood'. This paradox highlights the dilemma that exists for young mothers in that the mothering that young mothers do, is not viewed as exemplifying the activities associated with citizenship, yet, at the same time, their mothering remains under the constant monitoring and surveillance of the state. Consequently, young mothers appear to be situated as subjects, rather than as citizens, of the state. However, this paradox has been either ignored or only briefly touched on by liberal and feminist citizenship theorists, indicating that there is a need to further explore young mothers' social and political positioning as citizens. What follows is an examination of the ways that young mothers' participate and contribute in the lives of their children and in their communities. In addition, the barriers, which young mothers sometimes confront in attempting to actively participate as citizens and, in being viewed as active citizens, will also be discussed.

Becoming Responsible

In order to draw connections between the lives of young mothers and what it means to be viewed as a citizen, it is first necessary to demonstrate the ways that young mothers have assimilated mainstream views of what it means to be a responsible citizen. This is because, reflected in New Labour politics is the view that in order for one to be deserving of citizenship rights, one must also fulfil certain responsibilities.

One way that the rhetoric of responsibility has been internalised by the young mothers I interviewed, is reflected through their understanding of what it means to be a 'good' mother. For example, Lorna shared the various factors related to the need to feel and be viewed as a 'good' mother:

'...When I brought her up to my mum's, my mom says to me, you're only 21 Lorna she says, but eh, she says, I don't, I knew you could do it she says, but, now she says, I never thought you could do it as good as you do it now. When my mom says things like that to me it sorta makes me think, ken, she must think that I'm doing a really good job, but as my dad says, my dad says, ken what I mean, 'cause like two years ago I got myself into a lot of trouble ken what I mean? I've been in jail, I've been through a lot of things, as my dad says, I've got my head screwed back on, and as I've said to my dad, but that's Annie that's changed that, nobody else, because what's the point of doing something stupid when it's her that I'm gonnae miss out on? I mean I dinnae want anybody taking her off me, I dinnae want her to go into care or anything like that 'cause I dinnae think I could live with myself if that did happen.'

Two themes emerge through Lorna's account of her experience of becoming a mother. First, in describing her own mother's view of Lorna as 'doing a really good job', Lorna draws attention to the positive impact this has had on her developing a positive identity as a mother. Second, Lorna also indicates that being a mother has resulted in her desire to become responsible. In this case, this desire was somewhat motivated by the

fear of having Annie 'taken off her by social work. Donna also displayed similar motivations:

The one big decision that I've had to make was, and I just made it, was that I had a hyracoidean habit. I used to take heroin and whatever, and I got myself sorted to go see a doctor and psychiatric nurse and they help you to get off through prescription...and now I managed to get myself down from 25 and that's been one decision I've made because of her (Donna's daughter). I dinnae want my daughter to see me stoned or anything like that. I dinnae think it's very fair smoking heroin, it's not a very good start in life if she sits and sees me doing it, she's gonnae think that's ok. And it's no ok; it's anything but OK. So...I thought, if I don't get my act together, I'm gonnae end getting her taken off me and I've struggled for nearly 4 and a half years to keep her.'

Hence, there appears to be two motivating factors underlying Donna's recognition and desire to make some personal changes in her life that would enable her to 'get her act together'. The first is that Donna held the desire to give her daughter a 'good start in life'. However, her narrative also demonstrates that a second factor influencing her decision to become 'responsible' was her need to be seen as behaving morally responsible as a result of her fear of having her child 'taken off her'. This indicates that Donna was also very much aware that her mothering was being monitored by the health and social service professionals that she was in contact with.

Another way in which the young women portrayed themselves as 'responsible' mothers was through distinguishing themselves from other mothers whom they viewed as 'irresponsible'. This is reflected through Brenda's account of the reasons why she takes her son to the Children's Centre:

'That was a big decision to put Collin in nursery (at the West Pilton Children's Centre)... cause Collin is my kid and it was my decision to bring him up and see the majority of people who have their kids in here (W.P.C.C) are because they're under social work supervision and some of them have parents who take drugs and are alcoholics and just not coping whereas I put Brandon here because I had post-natal depression. But part of my reason for get post natal depression wasn't because of

the kids but because I was staying at my parents...but it was a good decision.'

Brenda's narrative indicates that using social services can have a stigmatising effect on service users. As such, although she believes her decision to put Collin in the nursery at the Children's Centre was a good one, she also needed to distance her reasons for using the centre from the other mothers who, in her opinion, were 'alcoholics and just not coping'. Brenda also emphasised that this decision was in no way linked to her children's behaviour, but rather, as a result of other stresses. This further suggests that Brenda did not want her need for support to be viewed as a reflection of her children's behaviour. This may have been because she did not want her children's behaviour and in turn her parenting, to be under the scrutiny of both the workers at the centre or by myself. Thus, Brenda's narrative indicates that as a result of the mixed messages and stigma associated with accessing social service supports, young mothers' may struggle in making the decision to ask for support.

The young mothers' view of responsible mothering was also attached to the notion that good mothers are also self-sacrificing. For Dionne this meant that she rarely, if ever, spent any time or money on herself as is reflected in her statement,

'most of the girls at Stepping Stones try and get me out but I can't because of the money and I pay my bills, buy Billy's nappies, save money for Christmas time and if there is any extra I get my self something which isn't very often.'

Hence, as with many of the young mothers in this study, Dionne's portrayal of the 'good' mother is directly linked to the belief that through denying herself material pleasures in order to provide for her child, she is demonstrating responsible behaviour. This is further exemplified through Veronica's narrative regarding her parenting skills.

When I asked Veronica what she felt she was particularly good at as a parent she replied:

‘Everything, I really wouldn’t say I’m bad at anything because everything my bairn needs, I’m always, I’ve done everything since the day she was born, and I’ll do everything until the day she leaves home. So I wouldn’t say I was bad at anything...everything I do is for Nicky. It’s like, I may not have the best house, but I have a really nice house and the only reason my house is nice is because everything is for my bairn, everything I do, everything I work for is for Nicky...I’d like to buy a house, then a car, things like that and so if anything happened Nicole would have a house, finances, things like that. Ken, when she’s older, ken, she can have her own house and she can have her friends come over and you not staying in a council flat and things like that.’

Three issues emerge from both Dionne’s and Veronica’s narratives. First, Dionne’s decision to deny herself the time or money to go out with friends or buy something personal, suggests that she is deeply affected by a welfare system that provides little financial and emotional support to young mothers living in poverty. Second, Veronica demonstrates the need to portray herself as not only a ‘good’ mother, but as a mother who isn’t ‘bad at anything’ and she attempts to substantiate this claim by stating that everything she does is for her daughter. As previously discussed, this may be yet another way in which young mothers demonstrate the pressure they feel under to present themselves as the ‘ideal’ mother in that their failure to do so may result in substantiating or increasing the social stigma attached to young motherhood. The third issue, which was also demonstrated through Yvonne’s and Brenda’s narratives, is about the impact that this pressure to be good, or to be seen to be good at everything, could have on a young mother’s decision to access support with regard to maternal health and well being. This finding confirms earlier arguments about the impact that stigma can have on a person’s need to ‘perform’ and thus deny themselves the opportunity for self-improvement (Goffman, 1959).

Discussion

What has been presented here are examples of what the young mothers in this study viewed as 'responsible' mothering and how this has translated into narratives about what it means to be a 'good' mother. This discourse of responsibility has been influenced by a number of factors including the fear of having their children 'taken off' them; the significance of being perceived by others as being a 'good mother'; the need to justify their use of certain services that are normally used by mothers who 'aren't coping'; and finally, through carrying the belief that a good mother is one that will always put her own needs last, or in many cases, by denying her needs completely.

One common thread emerging from the young mothers' interviews has been the connection between young motherhood, social services, and 'stigma'. The relationship between stigma and the use of social services has been well documented (Holman, 1988, Scholte et al, 1999, Jacono and Jacono, 2001). Goffman (1963) in his seminal work on stigma illustrates three different stigmatising attributes including: broad categories of abominations of the body; blemishes of individual character; and tribal or social stigma by race, nation and religion (cited in Scholte et al, 1999:374). Young mothers fit into Goffman's first category through having engaged in what is commonly viewed as 'irresponsible' sexual behaviour that has resulted in a teenage pregnancy and thus, an 'abomination' of the body. In addition, young mothers fit into the second category as a result of having 'allowed' this abomination to have occurred in the first place and are thus viewed as having something innately problematic with their individual character.

Although it appears that many of the young mothers internalised the stigma attached to young motherhood, they have responded to this issue in very different ways such as through voicing their fear of having their children removed from their care because of both their own views of what it means to be a good mother, in addition to a belief that their parenting practices are under the surveillance of social services. This corresponds with Baker and Carson (1999) whose research on mothers with substance abuse issues found that their views of responsible mothering practices, reflected dominant ideologies of good and bad mothering. For others, however, the stigma attached to young motherhood was demonstrated through her need to contrast her use of social services as being different from other mothers who had experiences with drug and alcohol problems. Finally, for some mothers, the stigma attached to young motherhood may prevent them from using social services if and when they need support. These experiences raise an important question for social work about the possibility of developing practice and policy that can create a balance between 'policing' and 'supporting' young mothers. One can hardly deny the need to encourage 'responsible' parenting amongst all populations, however, if young mothers are fearful that unless they 'get their act together' or their 'head screwed on straight' they will lose their child, the chance that they will access support on their own volition seems highly unlikely (Jacono and Jacono, 2001).

Young Mothers, Citizenship and Caring

The way that young mothers have integrated what they believe to be social work's and other professional views of responsibility has implications for the ways in which the notion of the responsible citizen is understood in both political and social terms. As

such, whilst young mothers are encouraged to engage in acts of 'responsible' mothering, this takes place in the private sphere. In turn, this maintains their social exclusion from the notion of citizenship that is presented by the state through social policies and social service provision³¹. Through illustrating the ways in which young mothers understand and prioritise what they consider to be their caring responsibilities, what will be argued here is that even though young mothers have taken on the state's pressure to be 'responsible', they continue to be excluded from the liberal notion of citizenship by fulfilling these duties within the private sphere.

As demonstrated in earlier chapters, engaging in the provision of care was experienced by many of the young mothers long before they had children of their own. In addition, being viewed as a carer by others as well as by oneself appears to be an important aspect of many of the young mothers identities. As Veronica explains:

'My friend's wee boy ye. I had him constantly, I done everything that a mother could do, and even though he knew that she was his mother, but like I remember one night I left and I was there constantly, if I went home he went home with me and my mom would take him, see it was like having my own child. And one night my mom said, 'you're having a break 'cause he's not you're bairn, you have to have time to yourself'. So one night I was like away for about an hour and she was on the phone saying 'you have to come over, you have to come over 'cause the bairn is greetin' and as soon as I got over there he stopped straight away, and it was like we had that bond sorta thing.'

Hence, being and being viewed as a carer appears to be an important aspect of Veronica's identity and that her ability to provide good care, is an important part of the way in which she views and values herself.

³¹ New Right reforms have produced a concept of citizenship in which dependency is to be avoided. New Labour has refined its ideological basis of caring to make caring an expression of citizen obligation

Providing care to loved ones was also viewed as fulfilling a responsibility. When I asked the young mothers what additional responsibilities they felt they had outside of caring for their children, I was met with a variety of 'caring' stories. As Lorna explained:

L: If I'm not looking after Annie I'm looking after my dad 'cause my dad's gotta get a liver transplant, so everyday of the week I'm up at my dad's, I'm looking after him or I'm just trying to keep him company, so if I'm not here I'm at my dad's.

S: So is that a big responsibility of yours, taking care of your dad?

L: I wonnae say it's a big responsibility eh, to my dad it is, but I'm 21 now, he's done everything for me, its my turn now to try and help him.

S: does he get any other support or does he need to rely on you?

L: no, he relies on me, like all his benefit and everything, its all by me, I have to go and cash all his books and if he's got any, like he wears glasses and that, I take him to his hospital appointments, like I took him to the opticians on Friday so I mean I gotta, he can't go anywhere, it's always me that's there. It doesn't even bother me.'

Lorna's narrative demonstrates that in addition to the care that she provides to her daughter, the majority of her time is spent caring for other family members. Although Laura states that she does not find the caring she provides for her father to be a responsibility, the way in which she presents her caring actions show that she does. Perhaps this is because this is a responsibility that Laura has chosen for herself and one that she is happy to engage in particularly since in the past, her father has 'done everything' for her. Yet, through describing her feelings regarding her father's reliance on her, Lorna demonstrates the need to make a distinction between what she deems to be a responsibility and what she feels is something she is engaging in willingly. This is not surprising considering the devaluing the provision of unpaid care under New Labour which views 'caring' as an obligation (Harris, 2002).

(Harris, 2002).

Discussion

New Labour's policies and programmes indicate that the caring that young mothers prioritise and value may result in their exclusion from experiencing substantive citizenship. This raises questions about the implications for people who view caring for family as a duty they value, but that is not valued by the state. This is a particularly important question when considering that the young mothers' who I interviewed view their roles as carers, whether it is for their children or other family members, as both a responsibility and a priority. The reasons that the young mothers provided for prioritising these responsibilities above others, corresponds with feminist perspectives on citizenship that argues that inclusive definitions of citizenship must include caring and other activities which occur in the private/domestic sphere (Sevenhuijsen, 2000). However, as I will argue, these arguments have not been particularly helpful in the context of working-class and poor young mothers whose mothering and thus caring, is often 'performed' under the monitoring and surveillance of social and political policies and practices. As such, feminist debates that focus primarily on how to include the caring and domestic activities that occur within the private sphere, also fail to recognise that for young mothers, there is no private sphere as a result of the social and political surveillance of young mothers.

In conventional British terms, unwaged and thus informal caring has, for some, had 'fruitful' outcomes in both policy and research terms, through addressing the needs of carers in the private domain (Ungerson, 2000). This is particularly true for those who care for elderly family members, for those with severe illnesses, or for those with special needs. Moreover, New Labour continues to depict 'informal' carers as active

citizens who are making a valuable social, moral and economic contribution to society (Harris, 2002). However, this appears to exclude caring in the form of mothering (or parenting for that matter) indicating that mothering is viewed as a less valuable expression of citizenship. Although the government does recognise that particular groups such as lone parents, should not be economically sanctioned if they remain on benefit instead of participating in the paid workforce (that is, they are still entitled to receive benefit), this is only the case for individuals who 'accept the rules of membership as laid down by the government' (Dwyer, 2000:89). Hence, New Labour's view of caring as an 'obligation' minimises and devalues a mother's choice to prioritise 'caring' over participating in the labour market or through community involvement. Young mothers are therefore further marginalized through the devaluing of the ways in which they do in fact contribute to society through the act of caring in the private sphere.

In response to the failure of liberal citizenship theorists to include care work as acts of citizenship, feminist political theorists have attempted to develop broader definitions of citizenship (Lister, 1997, Phillips, 1997, Vogel, 1991, Yuval-Davis and Werbner, 1999). The main way in which this has been addressed, has been through feminists perspectives that argue that, as a result of the private/public inherent in mainstream citizenship theory and practice, both paid and unpaid 'care-giving' has been relegated to what has traditionally been viewed as the private/non-political sphere of society (Eisenstein, 1979, Elshtain, 1981, Pateman, 1983, Prokhovnick, 1998).

Tronto (1993) has provided valuable feminist arguments regarding the 'ethic of care'. She argues that because of its association with the private sphere, paid or unpaid care

work is a devalued role in western society. However, in relating these ideas to the connection between caring and social reform, she articulates that,

‘Care’s absence from our core social and political values reflects many choices our society has made about what to honour. These choices, starting as far away as our conceptions of moral boundaries, operate to exclude the activities and concerns of care from a central place...to recognise the value of care calls into question the structure of our values in our society. Care is not a parochial concern of women, a type of secondary moral question, or the work of the least well off in society. Care is a central concern of human life. It is time that we began to change our political and social institutions to reflect this truth’ (Tronto, 1993:179-180).

This is an important statement in considering the experiences of young mothers who, because of their focus on fulfilling most of their duties either in, or in connection to their childcare responsibilities, are excluded from notions of citizenship and active citizenship. The young mothers that I interviewed have indicated that, upon becoming mothers, caring for their children is believed to be their ultimate responsibility and duty and main priority, and that this comes before engaging in paid work, training or education would take their time away from their child. Their experiences correspond with Williams (2000) suggestion that New Labour welfare reforms which only demonstrate an ethic of ‘paid work’³² must be balanced by an ‘ethic of care’ that would equally recognise commitments to care. However, because caring generally occurs within the private sphere, it is devalued and is therefore viewed as a private concern (Tronto, 1993).

However, what these arguments fail to recognise is that the caring that is provided by young mothers to their children is under the constant gaze of politicians, policy makers and social workers. This suggests that ‘care’ is, in fact, an activity that is valued by the

³² This ethic of paid work is exemplified through New Labour through their demonstration of moral

state. This corresponds with Skeggs (1997) who argues that one way in which care giving has been socially constructed has been through institutional practices that are aimed at educating and training working-class women in care based occupations highlighting one way in which caring is viewed as a valuable commodity when it is attached to participation in the labour force. Hence, the fact that the care of children is worthy of being monitored through state institutions, and that it is viewed as a legitimate occupation highlights a kind of paradox surrounding young mothers' caring. On one hand, the existence of programmes aimed at educating and training women to care as a form of paid employment suggests that caring is seen as a valued and respectable vocation. This is further substantiated through young mothers' narratives about their experiences of being under the constant gaze of a society that monitors the caring they provide to their children. This is particularly true for young mothers who are connected to a statutory service such as the Children's Centre or who are in care, or who have been in care (Rutman et al, 2002). However, this also appears to be the case for young mothers in this study who felt that their role as mothers were constantly being judged as a direct result of their age and at times, their class and racial status. As such, not only is there a call for developing an 'ethic of care' within social welfare policy and practice, but a recognition that the care work that young mothers engage in is under the added pressure of being monitored.

Education for Citizenship

Community-Based Education

Many of the young mothers demonstrated a desire and ability to bring their private concerns into the public sphere. One way this was achieved was through accessing

overtones as a result of attaching conditions on to benefits such as education and training policies.

information that would enable them to make educated decisions about the care they provided to their children. For example, following the media attention focused on the possible link between the MMR³³ vaccination and autism, Leanne engaged in a process of information gathering that included talking to both friends and professionals:

L: Like em, vaccination, the meningitis vaccination because there was so much in the press about it like a child dying after having the vaccination, and the MMR because they were saying after, they were saying there was link between the MMR jag and your child getting autism or epilepsy or something like that so these are big decisions to make whether you should get your child these vaccinations. Because after you've got them vaccinated if your child comes out with autism or epilepsy or something like that then you're gonnae feel completely responsible 'cause you decided'

S: so how did you decide?

L: Through months and months of trauma, but also going to my doctor and the health visitor and getting all the information and about how high risk is and about the single vaccinations, em, but in the end my final decision was to get him vaccinated because, em, not because I was forced into it or anything like that but because when I spoke to my doctor he thought it was the best thing to get him.'

Leanne demonstrates how the anxiety she carried regarding the MMR vaccination became an issue that was necessary for her to educate herself about. Hence, even though this took Leanne 'months and months of trauma', she took the time she needed to find out everything she could regarding the MMR debate through reading the papers and through discussing this issue with both her doctor and health visitor.

Becoming educated was not only important in regard to obtaining the necessary information in which to make personal decisions. In addition, many of the young mothers welcomed the opportunity to participate in educational opportunities offered through Stepping Stones that would support them preparing themselves for future

³³ Mumps, Measles and Rubella vaccination.

educational and employment opportunities. For example, when Anna first started at Stepping Stones, she experienced quite low self-confidence as she was unable to read or write. However, through her decision to take a course in communications, provided by Second Chance to Learn at the Stepping Stones premises, she began to develop the confidence that would enable her to take a computer course at the local community centre.

Another example of how the young mothers' demonstrate examples of active citizenship through education can also be seen through Anna's most recent endeavour of becoming involved in a process of educating other young women. This has been achieved through her involvement in a peer education project that is supported by Stepping Stones and the Pilton Youth and Children's Project, a local project for young people between the ages of 5 and 18 years old. In the group, Anna, along with several other young mothers, use their own experiences as a way in which to provide education on being a young parent. As Anna explains: 'I put points of view across like about being young parents and things, like from being a young parent I know what its like and I know that I can pass that information on to others'. This example demonstrates how through the provision of a safe environment for themselves and their children, young mothers are supported in the development of skills such as literacy and computing which further supports the development of self-confidence. For Anna, having developed confidence in herself resulted in the belief that she had something important to contribute regarding the educating of young people about young motherhood. This resulted in her decision in her decision to join a group that would train her in the skills necessary to engage in a peer education project.

Discussion

For the young mothers in this study, becoming educated encompassed a range of activities. This included acts of self-education, literacy training, computer training, and groups skill training for the purposes of providing peer education. This is not an exhaustive list of the courses or skills that the young mothers gained either through Stepping Stones and other local resources, but it does provide an example of the ways in which education was accessed. One major factor enabling this process of participating in community-based education was as a result of the in-house childcare provision. Based on earlier findings, it appears very likely that Anna would not have taken the computer course or become involved in the peer education programme if she was not able to access appropriate child care, that being, child care that was available at the location where the course was being offered, and under the supervision of child care workers that she trusted. Yet, because these courses and programmes were offered through or in partnership with Stepping Stones, funded childcare provision was available to them through Stepping Stones. This allowed Anna and many of the other women who were interviewed, to feel comfortable with the idea of leaving their children while participating in educational courses.

It therefore, appears that the young mothers' participation in education has been undervalued or ignored by the New Labour government. This is because, in New Labour terms, recognised ways of engaging in education, training or employment occurs through one of their social exclusion schemes such as the New Deal for Lone Parents, Bridging the Gap or through making use of the Scottish Executive's LPCCG scheme. However, these initiatives fail to recognise the role that programmes like Second Chance to Learn have to play in supporting young mothers in education by

providing education to women within their own communities. These initiatives also fail to address the importance of providing young mothers with on-site childcare. As discussed in earlier chapters, education and training schemes that provide funding for child care also dictate where and how the child care will be provided (Ballantyne, et al, 2003). However, the child care that the young mothers I interviewed feel most comfortable using, does not fall under the 'formal' child care stipulations of the child care funding such as that which is made available by the Scottish Executive's LPCCG (Ballantyne et al, 2003). Consequently, although young mothers I interviewed demonstrate numerous examples of 'active' citizenship either through educating themselves or through participating in educational courses, these endeavours are not acknowledged within the government's view of participation in education. This indicates the need for politicians, social policy makers, and practitioners to recognise the value in offering community based education, and in turn, a more effective mechanism through which they can support young mothers in what is viewed to be an act of citizenship. Moreover, it may also be that in order that young mothers will access educational programmes even in their own communities, funding for on site child care and/or child care that young mothers choose themselves, will also need to be considered.

The Interface between Education and Politics

A common factor influencing a young mother's decision to access education was the experiences of living in a socially deprived community. It is precisely through having the experience of being marginalized and socially excluded from society that

motivated Veronica to think about the ways in which increasing her education could impact on the lives of the people in her community:

‘...I think that’s why I want to continue my studies, like history, stories about what happens in my community sort thing ken, make people aware of what’s happened rather than people like, its like things get covered up to much to make it look like nothing ever happens here...I don’t really know nothing about where to go and find out whereas with my studies, what I’m doing at Stepping Stones I’m actually getting a place at the NEN (North Edinburgh News) for two weeks and I’ll be, ken I’ll be helping out for them, ken like I’ll be discussing with them like I’m discussing with you ken, and maybe like if I become a journalist or even I research history, I want to do both...and show them the most important stories, not the ones that dinnae matter, its like, if you’re a doctor you’ll get a big column, like half a page, and your mate gets murdered in the middle of the street you get a wee column at the bottom, ken maybe a few short words or something. Show them what actually really happens rather than the fairy tale.’

Veronica believes that continuing with her studies will provide her with the power to be able to ‘show them what actually happens rather than the fairy tale’. Hence, Veronica demonstrates how personal issues can develop into political interests, and that this personal/political issue is what has motivated her to think about furthering her education.

Political interests and the confidence to act on them were also developed through the young women’s’ identity, this being, as a mother in and of itself. This can be seen through demonstrating how the young mothers drew on their mothering role as a way in which to obtain what they believed to be their ‘rights’. For example, Nicki had stated that becoming a young mother has made her ‘more confident to take action’. When I asked her what she thought it was about becoming a mum that led to the development of her confidence she replied, ‘knowing that I’ve got to protect my wee one...its not so much for me now, it for the best interest of my wee one.’ In addition, Nicki has also educated herself about her welfare entitlements and stated that ‘since

I've had the wee one I seem to know a lot more about what I'm entitled to, I won't sit back and take it now.' An example of this is the way in which Nicki responded to the obstacle she encountered upon not receiving child benefit:

'...usually when you cash your last payment you have another book sent to you...I tried to phone them but in 3 or 4 days I can't get through to Newcastle child benefit agency. I finally got through to them and I says em, 'I was due to cash my child benefit this week and my book's not in at the post office and my other book finished last week there. I was wondering if you could tell me when you plan to send out my book?' And they said there's nothing been done, there's not been any book made up for you and I said, 'well, I've got no money'. 'Well, could you phone us back and I'll find out what's happened'. I phoned back and well, we'll be getting a book sent out to you and I said 'how longs it gonnae take?' it could take up to 4 weeks. I says, 'I have to do without money for 4 weeks?' I says, 'where am I gonnae get my bairn's nappies or food?' And they say, there's nothing they can do about it at this end you'll need to wait 4 weeks. I says, 'could you not inform the social up at my end so I can get the payment?' I says, 'em, I can go down and collect it'. They said, 'we're not authorised to do that', so I says, 'if I phone them to get them to phone you to authorise you for you to authorise them to give me a payment?' and they says eh, 'ye, we'd be able to do that'. So I phones social security down in Leith, explained the situation to them and em, right, we'll get that sorted out but they'll need to phone us to give us permission to give you payment. I went fine, so I phoned them back and says all you got to do is phone them, give them permission to give me a payment and that's that. 'OK then, we'll get that done for yea.'

Nicki chose to share this story as her way of demonstrating how becoming a mother has given her the confidence to challenge authority stand up for what she considers to be her 'entitlements', and to illustrate how her motherhood status has encouraged her to increase her knowledge of these entitlements. As Nicki stated, she needed her Social Security payment in order to provide her daughter with nappies and food and this concern is what motivated her to increase her knowledge of benefits and the welfare system more generally whilst developing the confidence necessary in order to navigate herself through the bureaucracy of these systems. Nicki's experience also suggests that learning how to navigate the welfare system can be a difficult task in that,

it appears that welfare policies and services can at times work against, rather than with, one another. This brings to light a powerful example of how young mothers' status as citizens under New Labour is constantly in question. As such, navigating the welfare system takes considerable confidence that many young mothers do not have.

Discussion

Part of Nicki's process of developing the self-confidence which enabled her to challenge and work through the bureaucracy of DSS was through her involvement at Stepping Stones where she eventually became a member of the project's management committee. Both Nicki's presence on the management committee and her experience with DSS exemplifies how young mothers are more likely to become involved in 'public' or 'community' issues if they perceive it to be related to their role and responsibility as mothers, or to wider community issues affecting young mothers and their children. Corresponding with Dominelli (1995), this suggests that acts of citizenship amongst disadvantaged women are experienced through participating in community groups that hold both a personal and political connection to their lives. What follows is an analysis of the ways in which this process evolves into 'activist mothering'³⁴, that reflects the motivation behind these young mothers increasing involvement in the community.

Young Mothers and Active Citizenship

Having attended the project as a participant observer I found that through a formal 'parents meeting' every six weeks, the young mothers were provided with a platform

³⁴ The term 'activist mothering' has been borrowed from Naples, (1992) who uses it in a different way from myself. A discussion of her view has influenced my use of the term will be discussed later on in

in which to air any concerns and wishes they had regarding the crèche or any other project based issues. Although this did not always result in the original desired outcome, it did allow the young mothers to engage in a discussion with the staff and management about different issues and aspects of the project, ensured that the parents were informed about a range of issues and that their views were taken into consideration. In addition, participating in this regular meeting enabled the staff to pass on any news or information about the project or other community based services and other issues that may be of interest to the young mothers. This fostered a sense of inclusion amongst the parents that added to their overall satisfaction and commitment to the project, and for many, a desire to become increasingly involved in other management duties. A strong example of this is demonstrated by Karen who over a number of years, increased her participation in the project and who is now the chair of the project's management committee:

‘We have more of a say in the running of the place because it is for the parents, not just for staff telling you what to do and when to do it. You get to be involved in what and how you want to do it.’

Karen's statement demonstrates the value of 'having a say' in what kind of programmes are available to the young mothers and their children. In addition, Karen's narrative also indicated that there has been flexibility and choice involved in a young mother's decision regarding 'what and how' she wants to participate. This suggests that an important part of a young mothers process of becoming involved in one's community is through enabling her to become involved at her own pace.

this chapter.

Liz demonstrates a common way in which a member would make the transition from being a service user to representing the young mothers' views as a member of the management committee:

'I was nominated (to the management committee) a fortnight ago so...I was like what does that involve? And she says its to do with the running of the nursery and things like that and I'd already done a wee bit for the nursery anyway because I like taking minutes at meetings and finding out what me, what the adults, what courses they wanted to do, if there were any problems with the playroom and wrote it all down for like the project meeting for all the parents to sit down and talk. Also, I was asked if I would like to try to sort out something different from Ratho for the holiday this year, to see if we had similar funding to last year what we could afford to do this year so I've doing a lot of that and just after that they said, why don't you try for the management committee and I was like, OK, put my name down. I just like getting involved into things and getting my teeth into something and sit and work it out so I mean...but I'm really enjoying it. It's something different that I've never done before, and it will look good on my CV.'

Liz's experience of deciding to become a member of the management committee evolved out of a process of becoming increasingly involved in other aspects of the project. Before joining the management committee, Liz had already contributed to the project by taking minutes at parents meetings, finding out what courses the mothers wanted the project to make available, and through planning a summer holiday for the mothers and their children. Furthermore, Liz's statement, 'it would look good on my CV' also demonstrates how developing an awareness of how this experience would benefit her personally with regard to future employment was also an important aspect of becoming more 'active' in the project. What Liz's experience suggests is that becoming 'active' in the community is something that develops through a process of time, confidence, experience and personal motivation. Moreover, Liz's process of participation and community involvement was supported through attending a project

that could meet both Liz's and her daughter's needs demonstrating the link between becoming a mother and community participation or activism.

The connection between being a young mother and increased community activism is further exemplified by Jenna in her response to the question, 'what made you decide to get involved on the management committee at stepping stones?'

'Because it's such a good cause. There are so many people, it benefited me so much, and there are so many other people that could benefit. And it's nice to know that even when I am too old to come along, too old to be sitting here and helping people with their problems, you're organising it so that there is somewhere for them to come, so that there is somebody to talk to, there is somewhere else to go just to get away from reality for a wee while. It's more for to know that it will all go as well as it has been going, and because I have been in it I know how people want it to be and how people's minds work and what they want and what's too much for them and what's too little so I can say 'well, I've been there, I know that and you shouldn't be doing it like this, you should be doing it like that' and its just to get a wee bit of input.'

Jenna's narrative demonstrates a number of important factors that have influenced her decision to join the management committee. Because Jenna feels that she has personally benefited from accessing Stepping Stones, she now feels a responsibility in guaranteeing that other young mothers will have this opportunity as well by ensuring that the project continues to 'go as well as its been going'. Moreover, the reason that Jenna is able to see the value in what she can personally contribute to this process is as of a direct result of her experience as a young mother. Kat demonstrates this quite aptly in her statement, 'I think its really good (being on the management committee) because being a parent of the project as well, I can put forward any problems, you know, coming from a parent's point of view that maybe the staff don't know'.

The women in this study positioned themselves differently in relation to their interest, involvement and attitude regarding their participation at Stepping Stones. This ranged

from coming along to meet other young mothers, attending parent meetings or the Annual General Meeting, joining the management committee, and becoming more actively involved in the running of the project. Yet, becoming a management committee member was only one way in which the young mothers demonstrated their engagement in 'activist mothering'. There were other ways in which young mothers could participate or become informed about project issues. For example, Lorna discussed the importance of attending the AGM and keeping on top of the funding issues affecting the project. When I asked her how she felt about being involved in the fund-raising aspects of the project she stated:

'I think any mother should be like that (interested in fund-raising) because they get to go I would say that it is important to ken what's going on and what's happening and what they are doing to change things and that eh. I really don't care about being involved in decision making. The only thing that I'm bothered about is if its got anything to do with the nursery or anything to do with me or if Annie's going on a trip then I like to ken everything about it and how we can sorta help, pull together and help and do things that make that wee bit of extra money.'

Lorna illustrates how important it was for her to be involved in those aspects of the project, which directly effect it's funding. This suggests that she also had an investment in the preservation of Stepping Stones. Furthermore, Lorna's display of frustration toward mothers who are unable to see the link between getting involved in the fund-raising aspects of the project and their children's well-being also suggests that, for her, being a mother is the main impetus behind her desire to engage in fund-raising activities. However, Lorna does not view her involvement in the project as being political or being linked to community activism. This appears to be because she feels that since that project provides her with so much support, fund-raising for the project is in some way her duty or responsibility. Moreover, because her issues and

concerns regarding the project are tightly interconnected with her personal life, it also appears that it is difficult for her to view her personal issues as being political.

Discussion

It appears that there are two important factors that contributed to the young mother's confidence and desire to become increasingly involved in the management of Stepping Stones. These included the provision of social support and opportunities from the staff at Stepping Stones, which resulted in the young mothers gaining a sense that they had something to offer the project based primarily as a result of their experience of being a young mother. This often resulted in positive feelings about themselves and the project more generally, in addition to the young mothers' development of a broader vision about ensuring the continuation of a project that would support other young mothers like themselves. In contrast, the young mothers whose children attended the Children's Centre did not appear to have this type of connection with the agency. As demonstrated in earlier chapters, all but one of the young mothers associated with the Children's Centre experienced a sense that their mothering was under the surveillance of the social workers that referred them there. Consequently, these young mothers continued to experience the stigma attached to young motherhood whereas the young mothers at Stepping Stones, at least during the time they were in the project, experienced a sense of empowerment. This suggests that valuing oneself as a young mother, and the ways in which this experience can be used to support other people, is an important contributing factor related to participating in the community.

Taking the Next Step(ping stone)

Emerging from the interviews was an indication that having gained the experience of actively contributing to the managing of Stepping Stones, to whatever degree that may have been, resulted in a desire to engage in 'activist mothering' in other aspects of their community. For example, those young mothers who were not quite confident enough to participate in their community outside the confines of Stepping Stones, used their own resourcefulness in order to access information that would keep them informed about issues of personal importance. When I asked Kat what community issues were important to her, she replied,

'I'm glad they made the decision that they made last week. There's an old Quicksave supermarket up the road and the council was wanting to make it a drug rehabilitation centre and like there's enough drugs and things going on here as it is. Its just going to make the whole area worse kinda thing and its not really practical putting a drugs place in the middle of two schools. But they're going to put flats and a wee cafe there. It would be nice to have a wee cafe because they're thinking of closing the community centre down. I could see myself protesting about that because that's where Stepping Stones has their lunches from on Thursdays, so what's gonnae happen to us? And all the elderly get their meals on wheels there everyday so like where are they going to go for their lunch? I mean, fair enough some get it delivered to their house but some are still able to get there, and at least they're out and about meeting people. I've been up a lot around elderly people and I just think its really sad cutting, stopping something.'

Hence, Kat demonstrated how although she may not appear to be 'politically active', she possesses knowledge related to the political issues affecting her community. This was partially because she was concerned about the impact the decision would have on her life as a young mother, and partially due to her concern about how it would affect other vulnerable community members. This reflects one of the aims of citizenship education, that being, the development of the political literacy of young people in the hope that this will encourage them to become politically active in their communities

(DfEE, 1998). Furthermore, through her statement 'I could see myself protesting about that because that's where Stepping Stones has their lunches'. Kat also demonstrates how being politically literate about personal issues can have an impact on the desire to become politically active. This suggests that on some level, young mothers are engaging in citizenship education through their affiliation with Stepping Stones, demonstrating yet another example of how political interest can develop through personal concerns and interests.

There were also a large number of young mothers who had developed a sense of confidence and a desire to become involved in something completely outside their involvement with Stepping Stones. Given the high priority that the young mothers attached to caring for their children, it was not surprising that the most common way this occurred was through their becoming involved in their children's activities. For example, one common way in which the young mothers who had school age children demonstrated examples of activist mothering, was through their involvement in their children's education. Furthermore, many of the mothers who felt that they had little or no time to devote to volunteering their time to causes outside the home, did manage to find the time to provide support to their children's school. Karen talked about the way in which she used to volunteer at her daughter's school through 'helping out in the nursery, running the library and helping in the after school clubs and things'. Nicki and Chloe also shared how they were involved in 'making up story sacks and getting everything set up' and stated that if the school needed help from volunteers for 'story time' they have taken some of the kids out of the nursery and made the story sacks with the children.

A smaller number of the young mothers also participated in community based politics that although were found out about through Stepping Stones, were not associated with the project's agenda. When I asked Dionne if she thought it was important for her to be involved in her community she stated:

'Ye well, I'm on the Granton Action Group as well (as the Stepping Stones Management Committee). I went to a public meeting and we could put ourselves forward for that committee...a public meeting that was about the street and they arranged a meeting about trying to get things done in the street but I joined it mostly because of the waterfront that could be happening, I want to know what's happening because I want to know if its worth my while to stay here 'cause if not then maybe I could try and get another house. But I want to see if its worth my while hanging on to see if I can get a brand new house. You know with maybe a front or a back garden 'cause that would be better for Brandon because it would become a better area. I know that its not going to happen over night, it could take a few years, but if I can try and get an answer sometime soon about what's happening, but I go up to all the council meetings.'

Dionne's motivation to put herself forward for the committee that was specifically concerned with her street, demonstrates her ability to access information that will ultimately influence what decisions she makes about her housing situation, and whether or not she will stay in Granton. Furthermore, Dionne also demonstrates how her attendance at the Granton Action Group is motivated by her concerns about the future of her community and the impact this will have on her son.

There were also a few young mothers who had the confidence to become 'activist mothers' outside their community by taking their interests and concerns into a larger political forum. This was perhaps most strongly exemplified by the three young mothers who decided to attend the launch of the 'Healthy Respect' project campaign. Prior to their making this decision, two people from Lothian Health Promotion³⁵ came

³⁵ Lothian Health Promotion is part of the Lothian National Health Service Board. The Lothian NHS

into Stepping Stones to discuss the campaign's objective of trying to reduce incidences of teenage pregnancy in Edinburgh, and hoped that some of the young mothers would come along to the campaign in order to share their experiences of young motherhood at the launch. Three of the young mothers, who had specific political interests that were connected to the ways in which society views young mothers, were quite passionate about the prospect of becoming involved in the Launch of the 'Healthy Respect' campaign. When I asked Veronica why she felt this was important for her to do, she narrated:

'There was a guy that came in (to Stepping Stones), Douglas from the 'Healthy Respect Campaign' and he was asking our opinions of teenage sex, teenage pregnancy and em, we actually got asked by 'Healthy Respect' to launch it. And we gave our opinions on how they could stop teenage pregnancy, on how they should have more awareness about the Brook and condoms, that sort of thing. As so we had strong opinions on that because a lot of teenage pregnancies, a lot of them are to shy to go and get condoms and a lot of people don't even know where the Brook is...so we went there to launch it...If it wasn't for us, it wouldn't have been such a good launch, this campaign because there wasn't a lot of teenage mothers going and that sorta thing, whereas I gave my opinion and stuff...because I know when I was that young that it didn't matter what a parent or an adult says, it like 'whatever' sorta thing but I know if a lassie came and talked I would have probably listened.'

Veronica demonstrates a personal desire and motivation to politically involve herself in educating young people about teenage pregnancy and motherhood. Through valuing her experiences and opinions, Veronica believes that she has something meaningful to contribute to sexual health education. Again, what Veronica's experience suggests, through developing a strong sense of oneself as a young mother, young women can engage in activist mothering in both their own communities in addition to wider political forums.

Board is charged with reducing inequalities and improving health in Lothian.

Finally, it is also important to point out that some of the young mothers not only became involved in issues that were directly related to their children or to issues connected to young motherhood, but with other community issues as well. For example, prior to having children and moving to Greater Pilton, Chloe was volunteering at a community centre as a dance teacher and was now in the process of trying to bring her skills to another local community centre:

‘My big sister used to do, what do you call it, aerobics for kids...she had to go for a course and everything to qualify for it and I used to help her with things like that, keeping the kids active, stimulating their muscles while they were still young and it was really good fun. And I used to go and help with my mom in the office doing paper work and filing for her and just bits and pieces but I would like to start doing bits and pieces like that in this area as well. I tried teaching dancing up here at first, it just dinnae go over well at first because I had nobody to help organise it and make sure things did run smoothly and it was too much to do all on my own so I gave it up, but someone’s spoke to me about starting it up again to see if it would work a bit better this time, so I’d like to do something like that again.’

Similarly, Jenna also volunteers in a local centre. Prior to having her daughter, Jenna had been volunteering at the Granton Community Centre for four years by ‘watching the children, taking them swimming, doing arts and crafts and stuff like that’. More recently Jenna has had to decrease her involvement, but continues to volunteer during school and summer holidays by working in the play scheme. When I asked Jenna how she became involved in volunteering at the centre she stated that both her mother and her auntie were working there and that she ‘got the job through them’. One of the factors that have contributed to both Chloe and Jenna’s involvement in the community as volunteer workers is the fact that they had a close relative that was already involved and who encouraged them to do the same. This suggests that another element contributing to the process of community involvement is through both being

encouraged to do so, and through learning that volunteering is a worthwhile experience.

Discussion

It appears that there are a number of factors that can influence a young mother's decision to become involved in her community. The types of activities that the young mothers decided to become involved in most frequently appear to be directly linked to issues associated with young mothering or to issues that directly impact the lives of their children. This is not surprising given that women are more likely to become politically active within community based politics that are connected to personal issues (Dominelli, 1991, Lister, 1997,).

It is also important to recognise that this involvement can occur in several different, yet equally valuable ways, suggesting that perhaps what is of more value to the young mothers is a recognition of their process of participation than the actual act itself. Correspondingly, I have borrowed the term 'activist mothering' (Naples, 1998) in order to reflect the ways that young mothers participate in their communities as active citizens³⁶. Although Naples (1998) puts forth exciting and more inclusive approaches to understanding and recognising women's acts of citizenship, her view also appears to resonate with the notion of the 'active citizen' reflected in the rhetoric New

³⁶ The term 'activist mothering' has been used by Naples (1992) to reflect the 'self-conscious struggles against racism, sexism and poverty' (p.114) engaged in by black American women between 1964 and 1974. This was made possible through their participation in social policy programmes that turned unpaid community activism into paid community work, resulting in their becoming 'empowered as citizens, with a right and an obligation to act on behalf of their communities and to make claims to the state' (Ackelsberg, 2001:397). Consequently, Naples (1992) has argued that in order to develop effective social policies aimed at combating poverty, it must validate and compensate women's contributions in the community, thus creating and expanding the arena's from which acts of citizenship are recognised (Naples, 1992).

Labour³⁷. This is because her view of ‘activism’ mainly focused on the women’s contributions in the community and, as such, did not encompass those acts of citizenship that take place inside the home.

Through considering the way in which the term ‘activist mothering’ can be used to reflect the lives and experiences of the women this study, it is important to recognise the ways in which the majority of young mothers I interviewed demonstrated, to varying degrees and in a number of different ways, their roles as ‘active citizens’ in both the ‘public’ and the ‘private’ sphere. As a result, I have broadened Naples’ (1998) description of ‘activist mothering’ to include unpaid community based politics and activities that young mothers participate in as an extension of their identity as mothers. Hence, it is through this notion of ‘activist’ mothering, that there becomes the possibility of including the ways in which the act of ‘mothering’ presents as a major factor in the development of political interest, knowledge, concern, and activity.

Barriers to Active Citizenship

Although the majority of mothers in this study were involved in their community in some way, they often did so at the cost of having to confront and overcome barriers to participating in activities outside the home. Perhaps the most common barrier to participating in activities outside the home, were what the young mothers’ viewed as their caring duties and responsibilities. This was evident through Lorna’s description of her typical day:

‘Get up in the morning, get the bairn ready, go to the shops, get whatever I need for the day, em, take a Monday - go to Stepping Stones, that finishes at 12 pm, go to my dad’s (to care for him), spend 3 hours at my dad’s, come down the road for about 4:00pm, get

³⁷ See chapter one for further discussion of active citizenship reflected in New Labour.

everything cleaned up, get the bairn's tea ready, by the time we have our tea we have a play about, go out to the back green, we go to the swing park that's just been built about 2 minutes along the road and have about an hours play there or she plays with her wee pal next door. Give her a bath and then put her to her bed. And it goes on like that everyday, it doesn't seem to be doing anything different. You go over the same thing everyday but I kinda do it different like instead of getting up in the morning and just dressing Abby right away, I try to do it different so it seems like I'm doing things in a different way. That way I feel like I'll get on with it better.'

Similarly, Chloe also demonstrates how her decision to prioritise the needs of her family over the needs of herself or the community has impacted on how much or how little she is able to be involved the community. As Chloe explained:

'I want it to be focused on my home life and my kids and how much I can take on at the moment and how much I have already committed, how much responsibility I've already got and how much more I can be taking on and that's basically just what happens, just got to think about more important things, make sure that my house is running fine and my kids are OK and my husbands fine as well, and as well as everything going all right.'

Both Lorna and Chloe demonstrate how little time they have left to get involved in anything outside of their caring duties. In addition, Lorna's description of the way in which she tries to 'get on with it better', also shows the creativity involved in making her job as a mother more interesting for both her and her daughter. This suggests that the act of mothering is just as challenging and active work as paid work outside the home, and that it is work that takes time, effort and creativity. Yet, both women suggest that engaging in caring duties, whether it is for their own children or for another family member, is also one of the factors that prevent young mothers from participating in their community in other ways. However, as I have argued earlier, 'caring' or 'mothering' duties are only viewed as barriers to active citizenship because these responsibilities are both unpaid and not carried out in the public sphere.

Other ways in which the mothers' experienced exclusion from community meetings was due to the perception that their 'young mother voices' were not respected or considered to be important. As Dionne stated:

'I've been trying like to go to meetings with the council and things about Granton Medway's back greens getting done up and things like that eh, but they just don't seem interested in you, knowing what the tenants want eh. Like basically, they've got a budget, they've got to spend it all or they get it docked and this is what they are going to spend it on irrespective of what we want eh.'

Dionne displays both the desire to get involved and her frustration at not being heard. Yet, both her knowledge of how council budgets operate and how this subsequently affects the needs of a community, has led to her believe that it is difficult if not impossible for marginalized groups of people to assert their views within local politics. As a result, the anxiety Dionne appears to have about what she views to be a lack of interest in her opinions has prevented her from participating in council meetings.

The young mothers also felt that their voices were silenced in the community through the belief that, due to their young motherhood status, they would be judged or not taken seriously by other 'older' community members. Lisa expressed this point in reply to the question, 'Are there any issues in your community that you find particularly relevant to you?'

'There are issues that are important to me but...if I was to go along to a neighbourhood watch thing it would be all grannies and you're not really welcome, not that they'd sit and snub you but its no really a variety of ages in the community, its just older people, that's basically it, young ones have got no say 'cause they think its young ones that cause all the trouble, its young ones that do this and do that so there's just no aimed at that side of things at all...I hear about them after but I'm not going along because they'll be older people there and em, they're discussing my family. Even though its not me, it could be my family's friends that are causing it and it's so and so, because I know

them, I won't listen anyway, but if I was 40 and knew who was doing it all like, police side wise, em they'd be bothered, but because I'm young, I know who's doing all the vandalism and everything else, I'm snubbed as well...my young mother voice is never going to get heard.'

Lisa identifies a number of barriers that are experienced by young mothers in becoming more involved in community affairs. First, the connections between people living in Greater Pilton are complex particularly because everyone seems to know everyone else, and allies and enemies are often based on familial history. This then makes it difficult for people whose family members or relatives have 'bad' reputations in the community. Second, and of more interest to this study, is the young mothers' perception of themselves as not having a 'voice' when it comes to community issues.

Lisa's account of how young people are perceived in the community is not surprising, particularly through considering the sense of resignation and powerlessness that was experienced by a number of the young mothers in regard to their ability to help to improve the area. Following Vonnies detailing of the ways in which she wished the community would improve, I asked her if she felt that there was any way she could get involved to make it better. In her reply she stated,

'It's pointless. It's pointless 'cause nothing's gonna work. It's just getting deeper and deeper and deeper and deeper. I've actually been at my windae and I've seen them (youths, children) walking the streets and the police are just over there. They dinnae bother, they just laugh at them and sometimes they'll grab the bairns by the scruff of their neck and throw them in the back of their car. They shouldn't even be doing that; they shouldn't be doing anything as such to anybody in the street, they're too young, that's that.'

Hence, Vonnies, who has lived in Pilton all her life, demonstrates how living in a socially deprived community can actually result in feeling increasingly hopeless, as opposed to motivated, about becoming involved in ways in which to create social change.

This is further exemplified through Stella's hesitation to be in any way connected to the community:

'I don't want to be a part of it (the community). Don't get me wrong, there is really nice people but I just don't wanna be known as a schemie basically...I'm just one of those type of people...I feel like I don't fit in here. Not that I'm to good for this area or anything like that but I just don't belong here. I'm not the kind of person who would be saying 'go and build better houses' and things like that, I'm not the protesting type of person.'

Stella's statement exemplifies how wider societal perceptions of socially deprived communities such as Greater Pilton can be assimilated by the people who live there. For Stella, it has become important for her to not be identified with this community in addition to not identify herself with the issues that impact on 'schemies', that has ultimately impacted on her decision not to become the 'protesting' type. Corresponding to Brenda's demonstration of distancing herself from the other mothers who were referred by social work to the Children's Centre, Stella's narrative demonstrates the impact of living in a stigmatised community. As a result of her knowledge of the way in which Greater Pilton is perceived by people outside the community, Stella has a need to ensure that she doesn't feel or demonstrate an investment in the community.

Barriers to active citizenship also appear to have been influenced by the young mothers' direct experience of discrimination. As demonstrated earlier, Veronica was very enthusiastic about becoming involved in the 'Healthy Respect' project. However, in her view the fact that she was open about not regretting her decision to become a young mother negatively impacted on her being given this opportunity. When I asked why she felt this way she replied:

‘Well he (the publicist) says that he could get us into the schools and things like that to talk to the girls and boys to give them our views sorta thing and they never actually got back to us at all. Even though we got heavily involved, if it wasn’t for us it wouldn’t have been such a good launch to this campaign because there wasn’t a lot of teenage mothers going and that sorta thing. Whereas I did, I gave my opinion and stuff and the way he just sort of left us out just isn’t right...I think we were just being used...to show people, I think they were hoping that we’d go there thinking ‘you don’t want children’ and that kinda stuff, but I’m not one of those people. I’m like, I’m the best mum that I can be and I think he was expecting us to be stupid little girls, walk out there, ken we got bairns, we can’t handle it, we can’t cope with it. But it just wasn’t that way and I don’t think he was to happy with that...if he’s a journalist he kens what stories sell and I think that’s the main reason he wanted us.’

Hence, Veronica demonstrates how her future involvement in the ‘Healthy Respect’ campaign was dependent on her fulfilling an image of young motherhood as a social problem. However, due to her unwillingness to follow the committee’s agenda, she was prevented from any further participation, resulting in her feeling angry, used and excluded from what she originally believed to be an important political cause.

Racism was another form of discrimination that acted as a barrier to becoming involved in the community. When I asked Brenda if she had ever considered getting involved in community events, organisations or issues she replied,

‘Not in this community, em, because there’s a lot of bad people in the community. We’re sorta the only tanned family in West Pilton and we’ve gotten a lot of grief off a lot people but its just pure stupidity eh. Like it doesn’t bother me ‘cause I’m able to stand up for myself. Before I never said anything but now I know there’s something I can do about it. But a lot of people don’t want to join it (from the black community)...it’s (being discriminated against) stopped me from getting more involved but it doesn’t stop people from asking me...You see, if anything goes wrong in this area, if a person’s coloured, there’s a couple of people in the area who are coloured, but they’ve got different dads or whatever so Darren (her brother) gets stuck with all the blame.’

Although Brenda’s experience of racism has prevented her becoming involved in the community, she also strongly believes that ‘more people have got to stand up to

people' and 'stand together to make complaints'. However, she also states that the only way that she would get involved in a community initiative to combat racism was if she were asked. Yet, in Brenda's experience, she has yet to be approached personally to do this as part of a community initiative.

The narratives about the ways in which the young mothers became involved in the community and the barriers that can prevent this from occurring have provided a basis from which to consider how barriers to participation can be addressed. As such, even for those young mothers who weren't directly involved in their community there was still a desire to be informed about what was happening in their community. However, in many cases, the necessary supports to enable them to do this were not. For example, one of the barriers to participation that the young mothers identified was fear of going along to a meeting or group on their own or that would be attended by other people in the community. At the same time, it was also stated that if someone went to them directly to ask about their view on a community issue, they would very happy to share it. This was articulated by a number of the women through their response to the question, 'what do you think it would take to enable you to get your voice heard?' As Lisa stated:

'There was a guy at Fettes Headquarters (Lothian and Borders Police Headquarters) who came to Craigroyston Community Centre eh, talking about vandalism and car theft and driving the cars all about the place and em, I think if somebody came down, like if at Stepping Stones said we've got somebody coming down to speak about this to hear your points views about drugs and all that, that would be good because it get them involved. That's a step to coming along to another one and I wouldn't care less what anybody says but it s just that first step for me or somebody else going out there an sitting in a crowd where its all 40 odds and they might have their own point of views.'

Hence, Lisa's suggests that one way in which to support young mothers in becoming increasingly involved in their communities is through creating a safe space in which young mothers can obtain information and have their voices respected. This supports a model of activist mothering that views the voices and activities of young mothers both in and outside the home as equally valuable. Moreover, this also suggests that in order to increase a young mother's involvement in the community, her mothering duties, responsibilities and experiences must be viewed as positively contributing to her role as an active citizen. This indicates that young mothers' community involvement is more likely to develop through engaging in a process of linking the personal to the political.

Discussion

The interviews with the young mothers addressed a number of barriers to engaging in their communities as 'active' citizens. This included having no time outside domestic and childcare duties; a perception that young mothers' voices are not 'heard' by older residents; a fear that they would be judged on their social status as young mothers; a fear of being identified as a member of the community; and thus, a need to distance oneself from community based concerns, and experiences of outright discrimination based on their age and 'race'. All of these issues may also have been felt even more strongly by the young mothers considering the current moral panic surrounding young motherhood, and the monitoring and surveillance that many young mothers feel that they are subject to by social workers and other service providers. Consequently, coming along to an open community meeting focused on issues that are generally linked to young people such as vandalism, becomes too intimidating of an experience

for them to even consider. In turn, it is also important to point out that my earlier discussion about 'activist mothering', should also account for the barriers to participating in activities outside the home. This would ensure that the term 'activist' mothering is not a stable construct, but one that is fluid, flexible and cognisant of social and emotional processes. Drawing on the young mothers examples of how they participated in their communities in addition to the barriers they experienced to participating also suggests that any discussion concerning young mothers and citizenship must recognise that participating in one's community as an active citizen, can be viewed as existing along a continuum of active citizenship. This continuum would encompass the domestic and caring duties associated with mothering; all forms of community-based activity; and the emotional, social and political barriers to participation.

Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted a number of important issues regarding the recognition of young mothers' as active citizens. First, the findings from this chapter point to a number of factors that can influence a young mother's decision to become involved in her community, the main factor being an interest in the issues related to young motherhood or issues related to their children's well-being. However, as I have argued earlier, in New Labour terms, to be a responsible citizen is to engage in the labour market or to demonstrate one's participation in society as an 'active' citizen on route to what has been deemed to be an economic, social and moral destination. Moreover, because caring for one's own child appears to be viewed as less valuable than engaging in paid work, and because young mothers prioritise their mothering duties

and responsibilities above paid work or education, it is difficult for young mothers to be viewed as active citizens.

I have also argued that unpaid care-giving is devalued through New Labour's failure to include the unpaid caring that women provide to their children, as well as the activities they become involved in as a direct result of their positioning as young mothers. This is where feminist arguments that view the political activity of citizens in its broadest sense, and that encompass all areas marked by negotiations over power including the home, workplace, and school (Phillips, 1993) are of particular importance to discussions about young mothers' citizenship status. Narayan (1997) stresses the importance of highlighting rather than juxtaposing the connections between different types of political activities. Consequently, she argues that,

‘a feminist vision of substantive equal citizenship for women and members of other marginalized groups - equality of social standing and having an equal say in matters of public concern - needs to focus not only on issues of political participation and representation but on promoting equal access to a wide range of public institutions in order to give marginalized groups visibility and voice’ (p.60).

This view is particularly relevant when analysing and theorising about the ways in which the young mothers in this study engaged in political activities relating to personal concerns in that it provides a platform in which to address barriers to their political participation. However, this view does not include recognition that the arenas in which they do engage as active citizens, are legitimate spaces in which to demonstrate political participation. Narayan, unlike Phillips, continues to view the ‘public institution’ as the location in which individuals engage in political participation. Phillips, on the other hand, argues that political participation does and can occur in the home as well as in institutions, but fails to recognise the connection

between these two localities. These arguments point to the value of integrating aspects of both these views in order to more fully reflect the way in which active citizenship is both developed and experienced over time by young mothers.

However, feminist perspectives on citizenship are also limiting when addressing the lives of young mothers. This is because they do not address the problem that even when the choices and actions that young mothers make regarding education and community based participation reflect the moral, social and economic values of New Labour, their moral, social and economic positioning renders their acts of citizenship invisible. Furthermore, although feminist citizenship theorists have developed an 'ethic of care' (Tronto, 1993) and include the duties associated with the 'private' sphere in definitions of citizenship, they fail to recognise that the mothering that young mothers do is done in public. This indicates that the notion of an 'ethic of care', through which caring activities both inside and outside the domestic sphere could be recognised as a valuable contribution to society, will not resonate with the experiences of young mothers. Rather, the care-giving that is carried out by young mothers is monitored through a state instituted 'ethic of surveillance' which, when situated within the state's regulation of young mothers, and feminist debates about care, results in a paradox of caring when taken in the context of the lives of young mothers.

These issues suggest that the inclusion of gender on its own is not enough to address the barriers to citizenship experienced by young mothers. Rather, the experiences of the young mothers in this study have drawn attention to a number of factors, including their gender, age, class, and 'race', through which their exclusion from experiencing substantive citizenship occurs. Although there are a number of barriers to inclusion

and substantive citizenship, of particular importance to this research has been the way in which the stigmatised positions that young mothers occupy resulted in barriers to engaging in, and being viewed as, active citizens. This was demonstrated in numerous ways, but with a similar end result, that being, a constant recognition of the way in which young mothers are viewed and judged by other citizens, including themselves. At the same time, the interviews with the young mothers have demonstrated that for them, the experience of being a mother can act as both a route and a barrier to community based participation. As will be discussed in greater depth in the following chapter, it is this particular issue that underpins community based social work practices that are aimed at supporting young mothers along a continuum of active citizenship.

Chapter Eight

Young Motherhood, Social Exclusion and Citizenship

Implications for Social Work Theory, Practice and Research

Excluded Bodies: embodied experiences of pregnant teenagers and young mothers

There are several theories and empirical works regarding the body presented within a number of disciplines, including feminist philosophical and sociological perspectives on female embodied experiences. With regard to women's sexuality and embodied experience, these have provided a platform from which feminist arguments about the usefulness of Foucault's theories of power and resistance continue to be heavily debated (Young, 1990a, Holland and Ramazanoglu, 1993). Furthermore, Mckie and Watson (2000), argue that these theories are particularly relevant to social work and social policy research in that '...the dynamic relationship between private and public embodied activities and thoughts is crucial to any exploration of social action' (p.xvi). These postmodern feminist perspectives on the body contributed to my process of developing of a theoretical framework from which to consider the embodied experiences of pregnant teenagers and young mothers. However, as will be argued throughout this chapter, working-class and poor young women experience embodied exclusion, both before, and long after they give birth. Consequently, I have identified three distinct phases of surveillance through which there appears to be social and political attempts at monitoring the bodies of young women through both social exclusion policy and programmes, and by social workers and health professionals. These phases include: (1) the onset of menses whereby a young woman's sexuality is policed through sexual health education, services and

programmes (SEU, 1999, Scottish Office, 1999); (2) teenage pregnancy, which is monitored by teachers, social workers and other relevant health professionals; and (3) young motherhood, which is under the constant surveillance of statutory social workers and the gatekeepers of social exclusion programmes.

Hawkes (1995) demonstrates the ways in which a young woman's sexuality is controlled through the treatment of, and attitude toward, her use of the family planning clinic. This occurs through denying legitimacy to the young woman in cases where both her age and class are significant factors in the assessment of her sexual health needs. This was demonstrated through the health professionals' perception of the young women as children who wanted a baby 'like they wanted a dog or a cat' (p.267). This highlights both the judgments that are made about a young woman's sexuality and sexual health needs, and the negative stereotypes surrounding young motherhood. However, the young women I interviewed identified a wide range of sexual health needs including, emotional support in regard to their relationships, support in considering options regarding an unexpected or unwanted pregnancy, and support regarding decisions to become pregnant and/or to become a young mother.

The discrepancy between the views of the sexual health professionals in Hawke's (1995) study, and the young mothers' I interviewed, indicate that the development of sexual health education, policies and services aimed at increasing young women's knowledge of how to prevent pregnancies and STIs, will not meet the entire range of their sexual health needs. In addition, there are other areas of a young woman's sexual health that are of equal importance including: increasing young women's

confidence and self-esteem; decreasing the potential for young men to engage in violent or other types of abusive behaviour toward their partners; the social and cultural pressures that could potentially influence the outcome of an unwanted pregnancy; and, legitimizing and supporting decisions to become pregnant and/or to become a young mother. Yet, the young mothers' interviews suggest that these issues are rarely addressed. This is particularly disturbing since sexual health strategies and programmes in the UK encourage the use of family planning or sexual health clinics by young people (Sex Education Forum, 1994, Scottish Office, 2001). Furthermore, although the Teenage Pregnancy Report (SEU, 1999) confirms that teenage pregnancies can occur as a result of the pressures put young women by their male sexual partners, it fails to adequately connect this issue to the repercussions this has on a young woman's self-esteem and personal safety, and does not appear to explicitly connect this to the issue of violence in relationships. Instead, this report draws closer attention to the connection between power/gender imbalances and the problems associated with engaging in sex 'too young' such as becoming pregnant, contracting an STI, and becoming a young parent (SEU, 1999a). This indicates a need for government strategies, social work, education and health services, and practitioners working in all these areas, to more adequately focus on the need to decrease violence in relationships and violence against women more generally. Moreover, this also highlights yet another example of how young women's embodied experiences are omitted from sexual health education, services, and programmes.

These issues suggest that young women, pregnant teenagers, and young mothers are continually being subjected to methods of surveillance through being at the mercy of support services that are based on what professionals consider to be appropriate, and more often than not, inappropriate sexual, ante-natal and parenting behaviour. Consequently, the policing of working-class, young women's sexuality proves to be a continual process that begins from the time she is viewed as possessing a sexual body and continues throughout her pregnancy and maternity (Walkerdine et al, 2001, O'Brien, 1999). As such, young women are rarely viewed in their entirety, that being, as a whole person that can assert their own agency in addition to being viewed as bodies in need of containment (Young, 1990b, Longhurst, 2001). These insights are useful when considering how social work and other educational and medical institutions' participate in modes of surveillance through which the monitoring of the sexual, pregnant, and maternal bodies of young women are carried out. Nevertheless, these debates have been slow to enter discussions regarding the examination of the body in policy and practice (Mckie and Watson, 2000), indicating that there is a need for further investigation into how social work research can contribute to theorising the body. What follows is a discussion of the way that my research has drawn a connection between young mothers' experiences of social exclusion as a result of their pregnant and maternal embodied experiences, and the implications that this has for the development of social work practice and policy.

Both feminist and postmodern feminist theoretical perspectives have contributed to my understanding of the relationship between the embodied experiences of pregnant teenagers, young mothers, and the state. Indeed, feminist theorists such as Young (1990b) have already identified the feelings of 'alienation' that pregnant women

experience as a result of their encounters with the medical profession. Although Young (1990b) focuses primarily on the pregnant woman's experience of the medical system, she also draws attention to the subordinate relationship that exists between the pregnant woman and medical professionals. Consequently, similarities can be drawn between the pregnant women's experience of 'alienation' in Young's research, with what has been identified in earlier chapters as pregnant teenagers' and young mothers' experiences of social exclusion both from and within social, health and education services. One observation emerging from my research has been the multiple and varying ways that young mothers have been excluded from the dominant discourses on teenage pregnancy and young motherhood. This can be seen through the inconsistencies between the views and experiences of the young mothers from this study, and the social policies and social welfare programmes aimed at young working-class women before, during and after they become pregnant (SEU, 1999a, SEU, 1999b).

One of the most powerful demonstrations of 'embodied exclusion' that has emerged from this study, have been with regard to Scottish sexual health strategies and programmes. As I have already argued, sexual health reports and initiatives in Scotland, support of a view of teenage pregnancy as a 'condition' resulting from the young woman's lack of knowledge about, or lack of control over, her body (Scottish Office, 1999a, Scottish Executive, 2001). Consequently, pregnant teenagers, like pregnant woman of all ages, become immersed within a process of bodily 'containment' (Young, 1990b, Longhurst, 2001). Reflecting on the relationship between the young mothers' experiences of social and embodied exclusion is particularly interesting in the context of Foucault's (1977) notion of 'biopower'.

Biopower is a form of social control that takes two primary forms, that being through attempts to 'discipline' the body, and through regulatory power that takes the form of social policies (Sawicki, 1991). As I have already suggested, attempts to 'discipline' the bodies of young women, pregnant teenagers and young mothers, are considered to be most effective through the development of regulatory powers that are implicated in 'establishing norms against which individual behaviours and bodies are judged' (Sawicki, 1991:68). Contributing to this analysis, Grosz (1994) distinguishes between the 'lived body' and the 'inscribed body'. The 'lived body' is how the body is physically and subjectively experienced whereas the 'inscribed body' is 'a surface on which social law, morality, and values are inscribed' (p.196). As has been indicated through findings from this and other corresponding research (Furstenberg, 1987, Phoenix, 1991, Davies, 2001), the 'lived body' experiences of pregnant teenagers and young mothers have been excluded within dominant discourses about pregnancy and motherhood. Furthermore, the exclusion of pregnant teenagers and young mothers experience of the 'lived body', is maintained through the way in which their bodies have been 'inscribed' by dominant social policy and social work discourses aimed at policing working-class young women's sexuality (Hudson and Ineichen, 1991, Kiernan, 1997), decreasing teenage pregnancy (Burghess and Brown, 1995, SEU, 1999a), and through social policies and services that maintain the monitoring of a young mother's parenting practices (Rutman, et al, 2002). Consequently, bodily 'containment' when connected to the notion of 'biopower' and 'lived' bodily experience, appears to result in a dis(embodied) view of the foetus as an object of public concern. This results in the treatment of the pregnant woman as no more than a 'container' with little or no autonomy. As such,

the 'special care' that she is asked to take with regard to her body, is more out of public concern for her unborn child than for the pregnant woman herself (Longhurst, 2000).

Theories of the body are not only an effective way of connecting bodily experiences of teenage pregnancy to social exclusion. These theories are also useful tools for addressing the social exclusion of young women both before they become pregnant and after they give birth. As I have previously discussed, young women from socially deprived communities are very often defined by their sexuality and are treated as 'sexual deviants' even before they become pregnant (Walkerdine et al, 2001). The negative portrayal of the working-class/poor teenage girl's sexuality is found mainly in mainstream sexual health education and teenage pregnancy literature (Hudson, and Einechen, 1991, Kiernan, 1997). As demonstrated in earlier chapters, this is maintained through upholding young mothers as examples of what can happen when they lose control over their sexuality. This results in readings on the body that are 'central to the conceptions of adolescence because of perceived threats to social order and moral panics about issues such as single mothers...' (Woollett and Marshall, 1997:27). Therefore, social work's use of the developing theory on the body can largely contribute to an understanding of how young women's embodied experiences as mothers are controlled and regulated through cultural discourse and societal institutions (Davis, 1997). It therefore follows that the theoretical issues put forth here are also useful in considering experiences related to the social exclusion of young mothers' 'maternal' bodies, particularly in regard to earlier arguments that suggested that a large part of a young mother's experience of social exclusion is related to her age and stigmatised relationship with the state. However, of equal

importance to the development of social work practices aimed at young women, pregnant teenagers and young mothers, is the examination of the ways in which young mothers attempt to resist the dominant discourses that have resulted in the exclusion of their embodied experiences.

Young Mothers' Resistance to Embodied Exclusion

The findings from this study suggest that there is a strong relationship between young mothers' experiences of social exclusion and embodied experience. Moreover, it appears that their experiences have also resulted in the engendering of sites for resisting the dominant discourse on teenage pregnancy and young motherhood. I have therefore found it useful to consider Foucault's (1977b) arguments surrounding 'power' and 'resistance' in discourse when examining the young mothers' narratives of embodied exclusion. Foucault (1977b) argues, that 'where there is power, there is resistance...these points of resistance are present everywhere in the power network' (p.95). Through this statement, Foucault breaks down the powerful/powerless binary, thereby suggesting that not only can power be resisted, but that the experience of power is possible through a 'plurality of resistance's'. Some feminist theorists have challenged the viability of Foucault's approach to 'power' through questioning its relevance to women's experiences, and in turn, the possibility of being able to acknowledge women's agency in discursive practices and participation in acts of resistance within discourse (Harstock, 1990). However, my research corresponds more closely with arguments put forth by those who resonate with Foucault's notion of resisting dominant discourses (Weedon, 1987, Hekman, 1990). Echoing this view, Weedon (1997) argues, that 'although the

subject...is socially constructed in discursive practices, she none the less exists as a thinking, feeling and social subject and agent, capable of resistance and innovations produced out of the clash between contradictory subject positions and practices' (p.121). Hence, although pregnant teenagers and young mothers are constructed in the dominant discourse as a 'social problem', 'welfare scroungers', and as 'irresponsible', the young mothers' interviews demonstrate a strong resistance to these social constructions.

The young mothers' narratives have also demonstrated, that engaging in acts of resistance to socially constructed notions of teenage pregnancy and young motherhood, can result in constructing alternative discourses. A strong example of this can be seen through the young mothers' discourses of responsibility, particularly those that demonstrated the prioritising of the caring of their children over education or work outside the home, and through their views about abortion. Moreover, their views about these issues have highlighted the existence of the personal agency possessed by the young mothers. This is not to suggest that the choices made by the young mothers were not socially or culturally informed. In fact, the findings from this study have demonstrated that some young mothers do experience social pressures from their peers. However, Tangenberg and Kemp (2002) point to the importance for social work of attending to agency in order to address the 'dialectical nature of the relationship between power and the body. That is, although bodies are clearly acted on, inscribed, and controlled, people also exert considerable agency and choice within these sets of power' (p.14). This was perhaps most poignantly highlighted through Raina's decision to have an abortion upon her discovering that she was pregnant for a third time. As discussed earlier, Raina had already

succumbed to cultural and familial pressures that resulted in her becoming a mother to two other children. Hence, this decision not only went against the moral views displayed by the majority of the young mothers in this study, but that also went against the values of her culture, husband, and immediate family. Although Raina's husband and family had no knowledge of her pregnancy and her decision to have an abortion, her experience demonstrates that at this particular time in her life, she chose to resist these immense social and cultural pressures, and engage in an act that she felt would be most emotionally beneficial to her. This suggests that a young mother's subjectivity, that being her 'conscious and unconscious' views, thoughts, and way of understanding her experiences, are entitled to shift and change depending on the context of their lives at any given time (Weedon, 1987). Consequently, the young mothers' interviews draw attention to the possibility of simultaneously demonstrating the power inherent in dominant discourses about teenage pregnancy, young motherhood and irresponsibility, whilst recognising the way that agency is used to engage in subjective acts of resistance.

The above argument provides an interesting position from which to consider how young mothers have also attempted to resist the process of 'normalisation' aimed at women's bodies, which deceives women into believing that if they control or attempt to contain their bodies, they will obtain power (Bordo, 1993). In fact, as this study has argued, for many of the young mothers I interviewed, becoming a mother provided them with what they viewed to be, a respectable and respected transition to adulthood, increased confidence, and a sense of responsibility. Yet, perhaps it is because the bodies of pregnant teenagers and the physical presence of young mothers represent a resistance to being controlled or contained by those that view them as a

threat to social order that such a strong emphasis on developing modes of control and surveillance through social policies and social work practices exist. This notion corresponds with views that suggest that social policy constructs subordinated representations of bodies in order to develop and legitimate certain welfare practices. Consequently,

‘Such bodies are therefore living sites which facilitate the definition of a welfare ‘problem/need’ (or both) and also act as surfaces on which to bestow welfare benefit/help. The body acts as a surface on which normalizing and pathologizing welfare practices are (often simultaneously) inscribed’ (Lewis, et al, 2000:12).

Moreover, Lewis, et al (2000) argue further that policy documents construct the relationship between the bodies of young people and welfare agencies through reflecting a need to educate them not only about sex per se, but also about appropriate forms of sexual expression. They therefore suggest that in order to actively contest this notion one must ‘resist the ‘needs’ that are assumed to derive from particular bodies whilst simultaneously offering counter representations of their subordinated bodies’ (p.18).

This view of ‘resistance’ confirms the value of having deconstructed the ‘unplanned pregnancy’ as providing a mechanism through which young mothers can resist the much publicised push toward increasing young women’s knowledge of contraception and the subsequent policing of their sexual practices. Through demonstrating that young women rarely, if ever become pregnant as a result of a lack of knowledge about contraception or the consequences of engaging in ‘unprotected’ intercourse or ‘irresponsible’ sexual behaviour, methods of providing sexual health education are not only resisted but rendered ineffective. Consequently, in providing an alternative

discourse about young motherhood, counter representations of their sexual behaviour and their experiences of teenage pregnancy are created.

These acts of resistance can also be linked to the earlier discussion of embodied exclusion. As previously discussed, young mothers are monitored through government schemes and social policies, and are under the constant surveillance of social workers, health visitors and other 'caring' professionals within their own communities. As such, young mothers carry out their mothering in the public sphere where their embodied experiences are excluded in the attempts to discipline them through policy and practice. Indeed, the bodies of young mothers are viewed as examples of undisciplined bodies; bodies that at some point in time went 'out of control'; and bodies that ultimately resisted the pervasive message that young women should not become pregnant and should certainly not mother. However, the continued existence of teenage pregnancy and young motherhood simultaneously demonstrates the ineffectiveness of policy and practice responses to what is viewed as 'undisciplined' behaviour, whilst at the same time resisting the view that young women should not become young mothers. This corresponds with Foucault's 'contention that the body is a site where the large scale organisation of power...connected to the most minute and local practices' (Holland et al, 1992) and as such, provides a useful framework for considering ways in which working class, young women experience embodied exclusion.

I have already demonstrated that the construction of teenage pregnancy and young motherhood as a social problem is influenced by macro level systems such as government initiatives and social policies that in turn create mechanisms of

surveillance and control. This suggests that social work, which acts as one mechanism through which the surveillance of young mothers is carried out, is cognisant of the power it has in maintaining these connections on the ground. Furthermore, social workers are in a position where they can consider ways in which to maximize the potential for embodied inclusion within social policy and social work practices (Foucault, 1990, Holland, 1991). This view is shared by Saleebey (1992) who argues for the need for social workers to include, support and value the embodied experiences of their clients. As such,

‘It is then, the social worker’s obligation to help clients regard and experience the body as an instrument of effective action and to give clients permission to take control of their body sense, image and energy. Social workers want to encourage clients in taking responsibility for how they experience their “dis-ease” and how they manage recovery. In some cases, social workers must help to raise consciousness about how clients’ body experiences have been subjugated as in the case of the anorexic female’ (p.115-116).

Although Saleebey discusses this issue in the context of illness, this view resonates with the experience of teenage pregnancy and young motherhood as viewed as a social ill by the state, and therefore as a subjugated bodily experience by young mothers. Moreover, both the New Labour government and traditional social work responses to teenage pregnancy and young motherhood can be viewed as attempts at tackling a social disease - in fact teenage pregnancy and young motherhood is responded to with “dis-ease” by both government and social work responses to this ‘social problem’. However, as Saleebey (1992) argues, ‘if the body becomes a firmer part of the person in environment equation...social workers can not only encourage bodily energy but help raise consciousness about the individual body and how it is and can be experienced’ (p.116). This indicates a need for developing a mechanism of mediation from which to appropriately balance both personal and professional

experience whilst recognising human agency. It may be that through such a mechanism, dominant social policy and human professional discourses will provide both the space and positioning from which alternative discourses can be included, and that will ultimately support young mothers in having a voice.

From Theory to Practice: Social Work, Community Development and Embodied Inclusion

The above discussion provides a context in which to situate further arguments about how the profession of social work can contribute to the development of socially inclusive practice. As I have already suggested, political and social responses to the sexual, ante-natal and maternal behaviour of young women has thus far failed to reflect an inclusive understanding of working-class, embodied experiences throughout the earlier half of a young woman's reproductive years. Findings from this study also indicate that given the opportunity, young mothers will use their personal experiences to both resist and develop alternatives to the dominant political and social discourses regarding teenage pregnancy and young motherhood.

Social work has been argued to have a demonstrated desire and potential to be viewed as a valuable participant in the development of social exclusion policy and practice (Barry, 1998). However, one consequence of the regulatory relationship between the profession of social work and the state is that social workers can be prevented from challenging current methods of decreasing social exclusion, and as such, often mirror rather than challenge political agendas and social policies (Smale, 2000). As this study has shown, instead of addressing the barriers to social inclusion and active citizenship, statutory social work in the UK has thus far engaged in

practices which reflect the 'welfare-to-work' type programmes that are currently embedded in New Labour politics and social policy. This has resulted in the development of mechanisms of surveillance and other methods of social control rather than in the development of new and creative ways of providing social care that can also support and encourage clients to become increasingly responsible for their behaviour and needs (Barry, 1998, Powell, 2001). In turn social work has been criticized for not creating enough opportunities or incentives that would enable service users to more fully participate in the social exclusion debate (Wilson and Beresford, 2000). This has resulted in young mothers' experiencing exclusion from social justice and politics (Batsleer and Humphries, 2000).

How then can social work professionals support young mothers in achieving social inclusion? One answer to this question has emerged from the young mothers' stories about their attempts at having their voices heard and experiences acknowledged by both policy makers and practitioners. This indicates that an important role for social work practitioners will be to become increasingly involved in community development initiatives that aim to support the political and social needs of marginalised groups of people. This further suggests that in achieving this aim, the notion of engaging in acts of resistance can be linked practically to social work, and more specifically, to community development based social work practices. What follows is an argument in favour of increasing the position of community development in light of social work's commitment to decreasing social exclusion, and the context in which it would be most effectively practiced.

Setting the Context: Social Work in the Voluntary Sector³⁸

Interviews with the young mothers in this study indicate that having a connection with organisations based in the voluntary sector are experienced and viewed quite differently from relationships with statutory social work organisations. This corresponds with Scholte et al (1999) who found that the greatest sense of stigma experienced by welfare service users was connected to the fear of being seen as failing in the task of childrearing to the extent that there was a risk of having their child 'taken away'. Moreover, upon reflecting on the young mothers' experiences of social exclusion it appears that although the majority of them had received support from community based professionals, none of these professionals were identified as a social worker. When social work was mentioned however, experiences with social workers were always framed negatively. This could partly be due to the negative connotations attached to 'social work' but may also be due to the reasons for why the relationship between social work and young mothers from socially deprived communities are often initiated.

Although a more in depth discussion of how statutory social work can achieve this aim goes beyond the scope of this chapter, it is important to state that it has been suggested that although community development is an important function of the statutory social workers role, it is important to recognise the value of community

³⁸ 'The voluntary sector in Britain comprises of a wide range of agencies and organisations that are not 'statutory'. That is, in the majority of cases, they remain independent of local or central government control...increasingly, in recent years the voluntary sector has provided direct services for consumer wholly, or partly funded by central or local government' (Pople and Redmond, 2000:393). An example of this is Stepping Stones who receives funding through the Social Work and Education departments in addition to small amounts of money from private funding. Consequently, this organisation remains organisationally accountable to both Social Work and Education authority.

development based social work that is practiced in the voluntary sector (Barclay, 1982). This is because, community based professionals are required, now, maybe more than ever, to both enable and empower communities to tackle social exclusion (Mayo, 1998, Twelvetreets, 2001).

Focusing on the practices of voluntary sector based social workers is of key relevance to this research particularly since under the current New Labour government, the voluntary sector in the UK is becoming increasingly involved in the delivery of welfare services (Popple and Redmond, 2000). In addition, the voluntary sector is also key in 'strengthening communities and in encouraging social inclusion and active citizenship' (Clark and Cree, 2003:70), in addition to providing 'the organising base for much of community development' (Caragata, 1999: 280). This suggests that social workers based in the voluntary sector have much to contribute toward developing a model of community work³⁹ that is aimed at addressing the relationship between social exclusion and citizenship amongst young mothers. What follows is an argument viewing community development as an appropriate and effective model for social work practice that is aimed at decreasing social exclusion. In addition, the way in which this type of practice can work toward strengthening social work's relationship with marginalised groups and communities more generally, will also be discussed.

³⁹ The term community work will be used interchangeably with the term community development throughout this chapter recognising that community development is the type of community work that will be continuously referred to here.

Social Work and Community Development Practice and Theory

There has been a long standing tradition of community development work in the history of social work in the UK which, in recent times, has been focused on the development of 'neighbourhood' work (Holman, 2003). However, it has generally been recognised that the position of community development within British social work education and practice fails to be viewed as an integral aspect of social work to the same extent as statutory based social work (Payne, 1996). In addition, there are those who continue to view community development as distinctly separate, rather than as part of the profession of social work (Taylor et al, 2000), which has resulted in a view of community development as a 'sideline' of social work practice (Clarke, 2000). The reasons why community development has and continues to be a marginalised aspect of social work practice in the UK go well beyond the scope of this research. However, through considering the ways in which social work can effectively develop practice that relates to young mothers' experiences of social exclusion and citizenship, will demonstrate the value and need for social work to engage in and raise the profile of community work practice by social work trained professionals.

Burkett (2001) draws attention to the paradoxical relationship between social work and community development that demonstrates how community work is both a marginalised position within social work education, whilst at the same time, there is an increasing need for social workers to engage in this type of practice. This indicates the need for the profession of social work in Great Britain to re-vision the

significance and value of engaging in a model of community development for social work practice. Correspondingly, Clark (2000) argues, that although there are many types of professionals, such as community midwives and community educators, it is the social worker who is in the unique position of being deployed in community based positions that provide them with direct, face-to-face contact with individuals. With specific regard to this research, Twelvetrees (2002) supports this argument through his assertion that, 'there is a compelling case particularly in the context of work to reduce social exclusion, that the social work profession, in order to be effective, needs also to apply community social work techniques, in some situations at least' (p.130). What follows is a brief overview of how a model of community development can be a beneficial framework for social work practice in the voluntary sector⁴⁰.

Community development as a model of community work is an important and necessary aspect of social work practice (Clark and Cree, 2003) and, as Mayo (1998) argues 'community work' has generally been associated with 'holistic, collective, preventative and anti-discriminatory approaches to meeting social needs, based on value commitments to participation and empowerment' (p.160). This demonstrates the multiple ways that 'community work' can be understood to be an important and valuable aspect of social work practice in the voluntary sector. There are, however, a number of competing theories and models of community work, highlighting the fact that there is no universal agreement of how to engage in community work practices.

⁴⁰ Social work practice in the context of this research will refer only to practice that is provided through the voluntary sector as the recommendations that will be discussed have emerged from the experiences of young mothers attending a voluntary organisation. It is important to consider whether

One reason for this is because social workers are not the only community based professionals who engage in community work practices (Poppo, 1995, Mayo, 1998, Twelvetrees, 2002).

Perhaps the most influential document that regards community work as a distinct yet important aspect of Social Work has been the Barclay Report (1982). However, in spite of this key government report calling for a reformulation of social work into a more community oriented activity working alongside community members, the history of social work in UK over the last 20 years has seen social work become more centralised and more professionalized and thus more dislocated from the communities it serves. So while community work approaches have had great influence on development of social work in places like Canada⁴¹ this has been much less the case in UK itself.

In spite of the marginalisation of community work in social work in the UK, there continues to be a strong rationale for the importance of social work practices that draw on community development values and skills. Taylor et al (2000), recognises that community development workers can use their skills to inform those that have the power to address the social, political and economic exclusion of the groups they work with. This suggests that social workers may be well positioned to use their knowledge of marginalised groups in ways that can influence social exclusion policies and strategies. However, an additional aim of community development practice is to engage in these endeavours **with**, and not merely for, disadvantaged groups in order to achieve change (Mcshane and O'Neill, 1999). As will be or not it is possible for statutory based social workers to engage in community development practices,

demonstrated in further on in this chapter, this view of community development clearly resonates with the continuum of active citizenship. What follows is a discussion of the ways in which voluntary sector based social workers can work toward decreasing young mother's experiences of social exclusion, and the benefit of using a model of social work practice that acknowledges young mothers' positionings on the 'continuum of active citizenship'.

Social Work, Community Development and Social Inclusion

Encouraging social work trained professionals to contribute to the future of community development practice and policy is particularly timely in that since 1997, the New Labour government has put forth its own agenda for encouraging the participation of people in their local communities. This can be seen through the Social Exclusion Unit's National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (SEU, 1998) and the Scottish Executive's Social Inclusion Strategy (Scottish Office, 1999b). Moreover, the first annual report of 'Social Justice - A Scotland Where Everyone Matters' (Scottish Executive, 2001) continues to emphasise the key role of 'Social Inclusion Partnerships' (SIPs) in coordinating activities that promote social inclusion through multi-agency partnership bodies. This occurs through the involvement of local authorities, health boards, further education providers, the private sector and crucially, the local community and voluntary sector. It is these types of initiatives that provide the current political context for discussing the benefit of voluntary sector based social workers' involvement in community development based practice.

however, this issue goes well beyond the scope of this research.

Although the community worker's time is mainly spent in direct fieldwork, it is also understood that in order to effectively support marginalised groups; part of their role is to develop relationships and maintain contact with other community based professionals and organisations, as well as local politicians (Barr, 1991). This ethos is reflected in programmes such as the New Deal and Sure Start Scotland of which a key element is the collaboration amongst statutory and voluntary agencies in applying for funding. The purpose of this is to ensure that community based organisations can work together to meet common aims and therefore emphasise the importance of 'joint working' between education, social work and health departments. However, Popple and Redmond (2000) argue that under the current New Labour government, community development as a practice is under enormous pressure to engage in 'urban management' as opposed to 'progressive social change' (p.394-395). Moreover, despite government support of an enhanced role for the voluntary sector, cuts in local authority grants make it increasingly difficult for community organisations to meet their intended aims (Mayo, 1994). Consequently, community development based organisations tend to reflect the partnership between the voluntary sector and the government through which policies and programmes such as the New Deal and Sure Start are employed rather than the issues being presented by the communities in which they work with. Yet this does not have to result in apathy or defeat. Rather, this knowledge can be used to refuel the motivation and necessity for social workers in the voluntary sector to use their skills in developing grassroots projects that can eventually be used to meet both individual and community needs and aspirations.

Addressing Young Mothers' Experiences of Social Exclusion: The Continuum of Active Citizenship as a Model of Social Work Practice

I have argued that social work has an important role to play in decreasing social exclusion, and that this can be achieved by engaging in a community development model of social work practice. As such, an important contribution that this research can make toward the continuing development of socially inclusive community based social work, has been through developing a model of practice which I have identified as the 'the continuum of active citizenship'. Drawing on the young mothers' experiences of social exclusion and citizenship, this model could be an effective tool in addressing the multiple ways through which young mothers engage in acts of citizenship in addition to identifying barriers to citizenship.

The young mothers' experiences of social exclusion and active citizenship has highlighted how the 'continuum of active citizenship' can be a useful model through which community based social workers can support a young mother throughout her personal and political development. A strong example of this is reflected through Nicola's experience of attending Stepping Stones from the time she was four months pregnant until her daughter started attending primary school. During Nicola's attendance at the project, her connection to the project continually shifted and changed, reflecting her own personal life circumstances. As a result, Nicola's role went from one of being solely a service user, to becoming increasingly involved in a mutual support process, to engaging in parent and crèche meetings, to eventually having both the confidence and desire to volunteer on the project's management committee. Eventually, the experience of participating in the project as a management committee member resulted in Nicola having the confidence to

participate in community based politics out with Stepping Stones. This example illustrates the value of meeting young mothers at each position that they occupy along the continuum of active citizenship. This is because not only does this type of social work practice provide young mothers with the opportunity to investigate their personal and political needs and interests, it also recognises that whatever position on the continuum of active citizenship that a young mother occupies, she is viewed as being 'active'.

The continuum of active citizenship can also provide a platform from where social workers and other social service professionals can develop alternative mechanisms through which young mothers can express their views and experiences and thus, contribute to a process of 'empowerment'. This was perhaps most strongly exemplified through the young mothers' desire to participate in their community as peer educators. In turn, through the support of both Stepping Stones and the Pilton Youth and Children's Project, the young mothers were supported in developing peer education programme that was aimed at sharing their experiences of pregnancy and motherhood. This not only supported the young mothers in attempting participate in their own community, but also provided them with a platform in which to address their experiences of exclusion from sexual health education, services and political strategies. This further suggests that an understanding of social inclusion must be developed beyond macro level factors such as wealth and employment. Furthermore, this also indicates that addressing micro level factors, such as participating in a peer education project, may be more significant in the presenting context of the lives of young mothers in supporting them in carrying out 'citizenship responsibilities' (Kidger, 2001).

The young mothers' decision to develop a peer education project has also identified another important aspect of working on the 'continuum for active citizenship, that being, its ability to identify and support the multiple positionings that young mothers occupy along the continuum. Although both the young mothers and the staff at Stepping Stones recognised the value of developing a peer education project, it was also acknowledged that not all the young mothers would want to participate in the same way. This highlighted the importance of addressing the possibility that not all group members will move through a process of community based participation in a similar way or at the same time. As a result, another important aspect of community development practice in connection to the 'continuum of active citizenship' will be to recognise and respect the different positions on the continuum that individuals within the group or community will locate themselves. This will require that the worker be adept at identifying the many ways in which young mothers are 'active citizens' whilst also recognising barriers to participation and, when appropriate, supporting young mothers in breaking down these barriers. Finally, this will also require that community based social workers consider and develop ways in which to simultaneously meet both group and individual need.

The 'continuum of active citizenship' has taken into great consideration the ways in which the young mothers in this study possess the personal and political attributes associated with active citizenship. This view of inclusive community based, social work practice corresponds with Powell (2001), who argues that,

'Inclusive practice has been suggested as an appropriate social work response to social exclusion. The concept of inclusive practice is closely connected to the idea of empowerment and user involvement.

Community development is an essential ingredient in inclusive practice because of its associations with consciousness-raising, democratic dialogue and empowerment. The concept of social economy is also important in inclusive practice, empowering communities to think globally while acting local. But service users need to operate in the context of agency policies that are supportive of inclusive approaches to practice' (p.114).

As such, one of the benefit of working with young mothers within a community development practice framework such as the 'continuum of active citizenship', is that it would create the possibility of addressing both the personal, social, and political barriers to the social exclusion experienced by young mothers. This would support social work practitioners that are committed to providing a range of services that are aimed at both the individual and collective positioning of young mothers at any point along the continuum. Moreover, as Somerville (1998) points out, 'the key goal of empowerment is that people should be in a position where they can freely choose the type of participation arrangement in which they to enter' (cited in Somerville and Kwan, 2001:10). In regard to the interface between young mothers, social inclusion and citizenship, empowerment may therefore be equated with the personal and political belief that the way in which they participate in their communities, to what degree, and in what way (i.e. as activist mothers, volunteers, paid workers etc...), and, that their choices will be supported and respected by community workers. This would also potentially enable social workers to work with, and alongside young mothers, in addressing their individual needs and concerns whilst at the same time, support them in their desire to become involved in their communities and to be recognised as active citizens.

This is a particularly key issue in light of Rutman et al's (2001), research which argues, that child welfare practices are generally informed by middle-class values,

which tend to 'hinder supportive practice with young mothers' in and/or from care' (p.151). Although their research has focused on practitioners' experiences of working with young mothers in/from care in a Canadian context, their findings resonate with the experiences of the young mothers' in this study. This is in part, reflected in the current social and political rhetoric surrounding teenage pregnancy and young motherhood, and in the young mothers' narratives about their experiences with social service, health and education based practitioners. This further suggests that the profession of social work may also be instrumental in developing not only a model of a community development practice that can support social inclusion and a more fluid view of active citizenship, but one that can inform statutory based social work policy and practice as well.

This highlights another important question, that being, in what way can agencies intervene in the lives of young mothers in ways that would result in engaging in 'strategies of empowerment'? Somerville (1998) attempts to answer this in the context of community work in the area of social housing by highlighting four main ways by which people can become empowered. These include:

- Through acquisition of relevant knowledge and skills;
- Through being given statutory rights;
- Through receiving appropriate levels of resourcing;
- And through specific devolution of power (cited in Somerville and Kwan, 2001, p.11).

Taking into consideration the various ways in which the young mothers' were participated in their communities and the impact this had on their identity as mothers, I would also suggest that an important role that agencies have in facilitating a process

of empowerment would be to highlight the multiple and varying ways in which in marginalized populations demonstrate acts of citizenship. This corresponds with Munford et al's (2003) commitment to recognizing the barriers and facilitators to active citizenship and to providing key issues that reflect the aforementioned 'strategies of empowerment'. Of particular relevance to the notion of recognising and increasing active citizenship, they have suggested a number of ways in which this approach can address both the individual and structural issues that influence the lives of families including:

- An understanding of how personal troubles link to public issues;
- An understanding of the daily lived experience of families and of the multiple positions they occupy such as identity and culture; and,
- An ability to acknowledge and attend to the difficulties and challenges that families face, whilst also focusing on where they want to get to, and the dreams for themselves and their children.

Hence, framing community based practice in this way further supports the utility of working along 'continuum of active citizenship' and thus viewing it as a possible platform from which to increase both personal/political empowerment. However, it is important to state that personal and political empowerment will be difficult to achieve without an appropriate redistribution of resources and institutional respect. In the lives of the young mothers' who participated in my research, it is important to recognize that in the current social and political context within the UK, forms of social exclusion are so deeply embedded that neither education or employment strategies will be effective in integrating young, white, working-class young women into the mainstream. Providing a comprehensive discussion regarding this important

goes beyond the scope of this research, however, this issue highlights another important role for social workers engaging in community based practice, that being, their participation as active citizens.

As I have argued in earlier chapters, although the Blairite "third way" rhetoric focuses on 'enablement' or 'empowerment' through increased education, training, employment or other examples of 'active citizenship, it fails to address practical aspects of social inclusion and substantive citizenship rights. This is because when people stumble upon structural barriers such as poverty, racism, homophobia, and other equally powerful obstacles to social inclusion, personal empowerment, in whatever form that takes, will not be enough to physically or emotionally experience inclusion. Hence, what is needed here is a social analysis that identifies the sources of structural inequality which, the "Third Way" avoids by focusing on 'social exclusion' from opportunity to develop their personal potential. Hence, as Hamilton (2001) argues,

'There is no doubt that education is important in tackling social exclusion...but education and training cannot be the panacea that Third Way politicians hope for...There is no reason to believe that the emphasis on education favoured by advocates of the Third Way will lead to a more equal or just society, although it may stave off a worsening of inequality. Indeed, by shifting the blame for 'failure' onto the individuals who failed to take advantage of the educational opportunities of offer, it may erode the public commitment to greater equality and inclusion' (p.98).

This is a particularly important point when one also considers the discourse of 'responsibility' reflected in New Labour government's Third Way, social inclusion and citizenship rhetoric. This issue is strongly articulated by Bashevkin (2001) who ask the question,

'What about people who aren't "responsible" in the jargon of the third

way? Is this just another way of returning to older notions of the deserving versus the undeserving poor – with the virtuous widow epitomizing the deserving social assistance recipient, for example, and the unmarried teenage mother as the undeserving one?’ (p.9)

Hence, it appears that Third Way policies continue, albeit veiled in the jargon of social inclusion and citizenship, to morally, socially and economically, regulate the poor (Cloward and Piven, 1993).

Connecting the structural problems reflected in Third Way policies to the experiences of young mothers indicate that inherent in the social worker’s role in community development is the need to recognise both the individual and systemic barriers to active citizenship. It also substantiates my earlier arguments about the impact of identity and culture on a young mother’s ‘opportunities and choices’. For social workers, this would require that we become ‘active citizens’ by connecting what Kenny-Scherber (2003) articulates as being ‘the macropractice of policy to our micropractices within social work’ (p.272) and thus, ‘participating in influencing public discussion and shaping the decision making of governments’ (Kenny-Scherber, 2003:281). The result of which would increase social work’s voice in the developing of socially inclusive social policies alongside our commitment to developing socially inclusive practice. Hence, whilst Third Way policies appear to maintain rather than alleviating barriers to social inclusion, it appears that there are a number of ways in which social workers can attempt to increasing the social inclusion of young working-class and poor young mothers. These activities could include: the provision of services aimed at supporting young mothers with their individual issues; encouraging a young mother’s personal and political growth and development; and using our knowledge and skills to challenge current social,

political and economic arrangements that result in structural barriers to social inclusion and access to achieving substantive citizenship rights.

Postmodernism, Social work and Community Development

Grounding community development practice within the 'continuum of active citizenship' provides a basis for a postmodern framework for social work theory and practice. This is because working within the 'continuum of active citizenship' demands that this model of community development does not subscribe to purely universal aims. This corresponds Taylor et al's (2000) view that,

'...the sheer diversity of community groups and variety of community activities and solutions makes it difficult for them to speak with a common voice...community development does offer a way to ensure that the diversity of interests in a society or a community have a voice and to identify common interests across diverse populations' (Taylor, Barr and West, 2000:14).

This acknowledges the complex and diverse issues presented by communities and the need to ensure that this diversity is not lost in attempting to identify common issues. However, it fails to include a mechanism for simultaneously addressing both individual and group needs, and in turn, an essential component of working along a continuum for active citizenship. It is at this stage in considering how social work models of community development can be practised, that drawing on a postmodern perspective can offer ways in which to consider new, inclusive ways of working with individuals in and with their community.

Burkett (2001) offers some theoretical signposts that can result in an alternative, postmodern 'revisioning' of community development. She suggests that by integrating 'the personal, the local, and the global', in addition to accepting 'different

ways of knowing, doing and being in community development' (p.237), can result in creating a more holistic framework. Correspondingly, Lane (1997) also believes that,

'For those involved in collective approaches, such as community development, it follows that community is a multiplicity of 'lifeworlds'/'domains'/'networks'. The task is again one of interpreting and presenting one world to another, seeking common meanings around which collective action might be taken' (p.335).

This suggests that postmodernism can provide a theoretical context in which social workers can practice a model of community development that addresses individual experiences whilst working toward shared aims. Moreover, as Burkett (2001) continues to argue,

'In effect community becomes the subject of human agency - human agents actively create and continually recreate the meanings of community. Thereby the interpretation of community ceases to exist in reified, singular and external frameworks of universal truth, and is instead interpreted as being continuously and plurally constructed and re-constructed in different ways in different contexts. To engage in the building of community, then, becomes an ongoing act of extraordinary creativity in which one comes face to face with the struggle of human relationship, of engaging with an-Other' (p.237).

This corresponds with a continuum of active citizenship in that it simultaneously addresses both individual barriers to participating in the community, whilst supporting a self identified group aim such as developing a peer education sexual health project. Finally, this framework for practicing social work based community development will also reflect the diverse ways in which social workers can draw on various practice 'tools', depending on the needs being presented to them at any given time.

Finally, in connecting these ideas to earlier arguments concerning the need to incorporate the theory of resistance into social work practice, Lane (1997) argues that

‘postmodern’ ideas about the dispersed nature of power and knowledge hold promise for multiple opportunities for resistance. Resistance is, however, vastly strengthened by connection; and connection is fragile in postmodern terms’ (p.338). At the same time, Lane illustrates just how important it is to work along a continuum of active citizenship in that it allows the social worker to attend to the individual as well as the community needs. Although resistance may be strengthened by connection, it may also be that the first step in this process will be to gain an individual sense of inner strength and confidence. This reflects another of Lane’s (1997) assertions that postmodernism can ‘heed particularisms such as: the affirmation of difference which allows a voice for those who are subordinated; the valuing of local, contextual and qualitative accounts of meaning and experience; and the promise of multiple sites of resistance and participation’ (p.338). Consequently, a postmodern community development model can provide a framework for social work that can engage in practice at all sides and from all position on the continuum.

Thus the ‘continuum of active citizenship’ provides community social workers engaging in community development practice with the tools in which to develop services that will meet the needs of young mothers, whilst acknowledging and attending to the different experiences and needs of the individuals that make up this group. This model can also be used as a way in which to effectively demonstrate the varied experiences of young mothers, providing as it does, a flexible framework from which to address a number of different issues at different times and in different ways. In turn, this will allow for the recognition that their needs and experiences are constantly shifting as a result of ever-changing personal circumstances. As a result, one of the roles social workers can play is to support young mothers in attempts to

shift their marginalised, if not completely overlooked, positionings within the active citizenship debate.

Social Work, Community Development, and the Body: A Contribution to Embodied Theory and Practice

I have argued that community development based social work practice holds the possibility of responding to the social exclusion of pregnant teenagers and young mothers. What remains to be addressed however, is the way in which the profession of social work can contribute to discourses, practices and policies regarding the body, which will support the development of increasingly inclusive knowledge and practices aimed at pregnant teenagers and young mothers. Consequently, it is necessary for social work professionals to theoretically and practically develop ways in which they can address both the 'lived' and 'inscribed' embodied experiences of young women, pregnant teenagers and young mothers.

Weaver et al's (2000) study of young women's experiences of public violence has demonstrated the ways in which the media has been influential in ascribing a view of women's bodies as sites of 'risk'. This corresponds with the social and political assumption about the inability of working-class or poor young women to control their bodies that has resulted in the treatment of their bodies as sites of risk. However, contrary to social and political discourses about the sexual health of pregnant teenagers and young mothers which implicate young women as being perpetrators of 'irresponsible' behaviour, Weaver's study portrays young women as 'victims' who are in no way responsible for their 'at risk' positioning in society. Yet, both the media and the social and political discourses on teenage pregnancy and

young motherhood have been incredibly powerful in shaping social policies and practices aimed at the embodied experiences of young women. As Tulloch and Tulloch (2003) demonstrate, 'the female body at risk' that is portrayed by the media is in direct contrast to the experiences of young women in their everyday lives. Similarly, the interviews with the young women in this study demonstrate the disconnection between their personal experience of teenage pregnancy and young motherhood and their view of public and professional responses to both their pregnant and maternal bodies. Although these two studies focus on very different aspects of young women's embodied experiences, they demonstrate the need to include young women's voices about their embodied experiences in the development of social policy and social work practices.

Reflecting the need for social workers to 'embody the social', Tangenberg and Kemp (2002) have developed a framework for both theory and practice that include three interlinking dimensions:

- The *experiencing* body, focused on the physicality of daily life;
- The *body of power*, focused on the physicality of oppression and marginality; and
- The *client body*, reflecting the bodily experiences of those who participate in relationships with social workers (p.10).

This framework is useful because working-class, poor pregnant teenagers and young mothers experience all three dimensions before, during and after their pregnancies. This resonates with earlier findings from this study that have indicated that many of the issues that bring working-class young women, pregnant teenagers and young mothers to the attention of educators, social workers and other community workers are linked to the assumption that their bodies are 'out of control'. This suggests that just as social work has used its position to engage in the policing and enforcement of

'disciplining' bodies, they could shift this power in a different direction, and instead, challenge assumptions about young women's embodied experiences. A main objective for social work in this area will be to develop new models of practice that can call into question current political and social discourses, policies and programmes aimed at controlling the bodies of young women.

Through considering the powerful role that social work has had in maintaining negative assumptions about working-class young women's sexual and maternal practices, it becomes clear that social workers have an influential part to play in challenging the status quo. As a result, the profession of social work in general, in addition to social workers engaging in direct work with young women, are well placed to develop practices that respect and acknowledge the embodied experiences of young women. Consequently, a particularly important challenge for social work is to consider ways in which to 'gain access to, value, and validate the lived experience of the body' (Tangenberg and Kemp, 2002:13). This could result in developing practices that will support people in sharing their bodily experiences, even in cases where their experiences have rendered them fearful and silent. As I have suggested earlier, one way in which social workers could attempt to achieve these challenges is through working within the 'continuum of active citizenship' model of community social work practice. This would involve a number of dimensions including:

- The provision of a service to young mothers that would offer them, as both individuals and as a group, with emotional, social, educational and political support;

- The enabling of social work professionals and other community workers to respect and support the social and emotional positionings of a young mother at any given time;
- To recognise that, depending on a young mother's individual circumstances, that these various supports would shift and change and be used in varying degrees.

In this way, social work practitioners will be able to support young mothers in creating spaces from which they can voice both their personal and collective embodied experiences. In turn, this will also encourage and support young mothers in disrupting the dominant discourses that have effectively marginalised and excluded them.

Finally, the continuum of active citizenship model for community development work will not only have implications for social work practice with and for young mothers but also with regard to social work's role in influencing social policy. This is particularly evident within the context of Bacchi and Beasley's (2002) concern with connecting embodied experiences to citizenship. They argue that due to the large number of public policies aimed at controlling both the public and private spaces, in which bodies operate, 'bodies give substance to citizenship, and that citizenship matters to bodies' (p.325). This corresponds with arguments from previous chapters that demonstrated the way in which social policies such as the NDLP fail to recognise the ways in which young mothers engage in acts of active citizenship. Yet, because young mothers have been 'reduced to their bodies' through social policy and social work practices, they become constituted as 'lesser' citizens that are required to conduct their mothering in public. Bacchi and Beasley (2002) convincingly articulate this point through arguing that,

‘...political subjects who envince forms of control over their bodies are constituted as full citizens, which at times is equated with a degree of distance from government surveillance. Political subjects who are deemed not to exercise this control, who are considered to be controlled or subject to their bodies, do not measure up on the citizenship scale; hence, their activities can be regulated in ways deemed inappropriate for full citizens. Conceptions about bodies act as a dividing line between full and lesser citizens, with citizenship itself seen as ‘autonomy’ from government’ (p.43).

This view of the relationship between public policy, citizenship and ‘bodies’ provide a political context from which to encourage social workers to think about more effective and inclusive ways of influencing social policy aimed at young mothers.

Due to the stigmatizing experiences that often make young mothers feel as though they are treated or deemed to be ‘lesser’ citizens, social workers must develop ways in which they can contribute to the development of social policy and state funded programmes. This corresponds with Clark’s (2000) assertion that ‘Social work, understood as the promotion of opportunities of the ordinary life, clearly requires the active conception of welfare citizenship. The role of social workers will naturally include direct service to those in immediate need, but it must also essentially include stimulating and shaping the active welfare citizenship of members of the relevant communities (p.139). It is at this juncture that the potential effectiveness of the ‘continuum of active citizenship’ can be viewed as increasingly useful model for community social work practitioners who are committed to simultaneously attending to personal and political issues effecting both individuals and groups from marginalised communities. In turn, it will also provide a foundation from which to explore the ongoing relationship between social work practice, theory and research.

Chapter Nine

Conclusion

Young Motherhood: What's the Problem?

This study has been carried out by engaging in a qualitative research process that has aimed to reflect the individual and shared experiences of young mothers in Greater Pilton. The findings have been analysed within a postmodern feminist theoretical framework that has enabled me to explore the experiences of young mothers whilst remaining sensitive to the fact that these experiences are contextual, and therefore, constantly shift and change. The analysis has been achieved through deconstructing dominant social and political discourses about teenage pregnancy and young motherhood and through examining young mothers' experiences of social exclusion and citizenship from their own perspectives. I have attempted to achieve these aims through:

- Demonstrating how the various cultural aspects of young mothers' lives in Greater Pilton have impacted on their views and experiences of young motherhood;
- Examining the ways and the areas through which young mothers living in Greater Pilton experience social exclusion;
- Considering the relevance of New Labour's social inclusion strategies and programmes to the experiences of young mothers living in Greater Pilton; and through,
- Examining the range of ways through which young mothers contribute to their communities both inside and outside the home.

The young mothers' experiences have been discussed within three broad areas of exploration. This has included, 'becoming a young mother'; 'young mothers and social exclusion'; and 'young mothers and citizenship'. Attempting to approach these issues independently of each other has, at times, proved to be a difficult task. This is because there are strong interconnections between young mothers' experiences of social exclusion and citizenship. Moreover, the young mothers' experiences of these issues are complex and varied, and continually shift according to their levels of confidence and self-esteem, and their changing perceptions of the needs of both their children and their personal circumstances. This has resulted in the need to highlight a number of insights regarding the lives of young mothers, and the ways in which the profession of social work can contribute to the development of practice and theory in this area. What follows is a summary of the main findings that have emerged from this study, the relevance of these issues to social work practice and theory, and some suggestions for future social work practice and research.

Revisiting the Trajectory toward Teenage Pregnancy

A key argument presented within this research has been that young motherhood is not always experienced as problematic in and of itself. Rather, it is the view of working-class pregnant teenagers and young mothers as representing a 'social problem', and the policies and programmes that reflect these views, that may be experienced by pregnant teenagers and young mothers as being problematic.

The interviews with the young mothers who participated in this study have demonstrated that the trajectory to becoming a pregnant teenager and young mother

is a complex and varied experience. This has led to a number of important issues connected to teenage pregnancy and young motherhood, including the slippery use of the term 'unplanned' pregnancy, and the limitations of sexual health education as it currently exists. These issues suggest, that the way in which teenage pregnancy is portrayed in academic research, social policy documents, and the media, has ignored the various trajectories resulting in teenage pregnancy. The young mothers' interviews demonstrated how 'unplanned' teenage pregnancies occur in situations where a young woman is well informed about the consequences of not using birth control. Rather, for five of the young women in this study, their trajectories toward becoming pregnant included, being in a violent relationship, feelings of powerlessness, and cultural expectations. Conversely, a number of the young women in this study have brought attention to the fact that for them, 'unplanned' pregnancies can also be wanted. These experiences have therefore brought into question the significance of the term 'unplanned' pregnancies in situations where young women do not use birth control, even though they may be aware of the consequences of not using contraception. Finally, there were also a small number of young mothers in this study who had consciously planned their pregnancies indicating that for some young women, teenage pregnancy and young motherhood is viewed as an aspired and intended role to obtain.

Regardless of the specific circumstances surrounding the young women's pregnancies, all but two, made the decision to become a mother. The social and cultural factors that influenced the young women's decisions to become a young mother included having a sense of being 'ready' to have a baby, in addition to

holding the view that becoming a mother was a recognisable and achievable way of making the transition from adolescence to adulthood. Furthermore, corresponding with research which argues that the reasons for becoming a young mother are no different than for older mothers (Phoenix, 1991, Davies, 2002), some of the reasons that the young women in my study gave for wanting to become a mother included, having confidence and pride in the ideas of care for one's own child, and viewing parenthood as a logical step to take within the context of a loving relationship. Finally, the young women's experiences of becoming young mothers echoes research that has highlighted young mothers' views about the positive impact that having a baby has had on their lives (Mullins and McCluskey, 1999, Rutman et al, 2001). Hence, contrary to popular belief, the young women in this study considered themselves young people, but not too young to be mothers. This indicates that for these young women, rather than experiencing young motherhood as problematic, young motherhood has provided them with a sense of confidence, pride, and achievement.

The young mothers' 'decision making' stories also highlighted the ways in which the young women's class and culture impacted on their decision to carry their babies to term. In turn, it is important to recognise that alongside the acceptance and normalising of young motherhood in Greater Pilton, there also exist cultural pressures associated with mothering. This was strongly evidenced within the young mothers' anti-abortion narratives highlighting the amount of support the young mothers received regarding an unexpected pregnancy. This suggests that the anti-abortion influence may not have been based solely on their own moral views and

need to distance themselves from 'all the middle-class folk who have abortions', but also on the moral views of their families and peers. The impact of class and culture on the decision to become a young mother was also evident through the young mothers' overwhelming pride and commitment to staying at home full time with their children.

The trajectory toward becoming a young mother, as demonstrated by the young women I interviewed, indicates that mainstream social and political discourses that continue to portray teenage pregnancy and young motherhood as a social problem, has failed to include the experiences of working-class young mothers. The highly moral stance taken by the young mothers regarding their decision to become mothers, suggests that teenage pregnancy within working-class communities, the cultural, moral, and social issues influencing the decision to become a young mothers, and other relevant a issues associated with young mothers' views of mothering, are worthy of further consideration.

Young Mothers and Social Exclusion

The young mothers' experiences of social exclusion have drawn attention to the various ways in which they are excluded from social and political discourses about teenage pregnancy and young motherhood, government funded education and employment schemes, and from obtaining housing, health and social services.

I have already highlighted the ways in which young mothers experience exclusion as a result of the social problem discourse and 'moral panic' surrounding teenage

pregnancy and young motherhood. Yet this is reinforced within an education system that has failed to provide adequate support to pregnant teenagers regarding the possibility of continuing their education throughout and after their pregnancy. Moreover, I have suggested that sexual health education as it currently exists is likely to fail in decreasing rates of teenage pregnancy and in the numbers of young mothers in communities like Greater Pilton. This is because although most sexual health education classes within secondary school settings will, at the very least, educate young people about ways in which to avoid pregnancy or STIs, the other issues that may lead to a pregnancy, may not be addressed. As such, sexual health education will fail to recognise the reasons why some women take risks with regard to their use of birth control such as low self-esteem, violence in a relationship, or their relaxed attitude toward, and in some cases, determination to become pregnant. This highlights a key limitation of the sexual health education agenda in Scotland in that, there continues to be a lack of national policy outlining the criteria of what should be included in sexual health education courses. This means that although some young people will receive sexual health education that addresses a range of biological and emotional sexual health issues, other young people will not. Hence, until such time as the development of a sexual health education policy that addresses the various trajectories toward becoming a young mother is instituted within the Scottish education system, the sexual health needs of all young women will continue to be excluded from some sexual health education programmes.

Young mothers have also been excluded from government funded education, employment and training programmes. This is because although the government is

committed to increasing the participation of young people and lone parents in the labour market, they have ignored the values and priorities held by working-class young mothers. In turn, two important and related issues have emerged from this research with regard to the social exclusion of young mothers from education, employment and training schemes. First, the young mothers have demonstrated a number of ways in which they are excluded from accessing education and employment programmes. The main reason for this has been due to young mothers' prioritising of their childcare responsibilities over education and employment. As such, even when these programmes have included funding for child care, this funding will not be accessed by young mothers like those I have interviewed, because they view the time they would take to engage in these programmes as time they are taking away from their children. In addition, the location and venue of childcare provision provides yet another form of social exclusion. This is because even when the young mothers were prepared to participate in educational type programmes, they did so under the condition that the programme was offered within their own community and under the provision that their child was in a day care attached to the programme or in an informal child care situation (i.e. if their child was being cared for by their mother or a trusted friend). This suggests that there are two important ways in which social exclusion programmes can encourage young mothers to engage in education or employment schemes. The first is to offer these programmes within their own communities; the second is to ensure that these programmes provide fully funded day care in a setting that the mothers can easily access.

The second finding that emerged from the young mothers' interviews about their experiences of social exclusion draws attention to the New Labour government's failure to address a wide range of systemic issues that can result in social exclusion. This is because their use of the term 'social exclusion' has only addressed exclusion from the labour market thus ignoring other barriers to inclusion such as 'race', gender and sexuality (Levitas, 1998, Lister, 1998). This suggests that in order for social inclusion policies and programmes to reflect the needs and experiences of young mothers, they will also need to reflect ways in which young mothers prioritise 'mothering' over participating in education, training and paid employment, in addition to recognising other routes to social inclusion.

Finally, the interviews with the young mothers also highlighted the ways in which they were excluded from accessing housing, health and social services. This was demonstrated through conveying the ways in which their age, gender, class and 'race' impacted on their interactions with housing officials, midwives, health visitors, and social workers. The young mothers' interviews also indicated that, often times, rather than being viewed as young women in need of 'protection' from something (i.e. physically or emotionally abusive partners), they felt that they were viewed as women to be protected from. This corresponds with Rutman et al (2002), who found that the middle-class values reflected in child welfare policies and in their interviews with social workers negatively influenced their view of the adequacy of their client's parenting and the services that they provided to them. At times, this appeared to have resulted in a feeling that social workers and other social service professionals were more concerned with the protection of their children from themselves, rather

than, or in addition to providing appropriate and effective support to young mothers. For some of the young mothers, a main consequence of this was that, rather than feeling able to share those aspects of mothering that they may find difficult or stressful, they highlighted the impact of the stigma attached to requiring health or social assistance, and thus, a resistance toward appearing to be in need of any type of support. This suggests that social work has a role to play in decreasing the stigma associated with the use of social work services in order to develop ways in which to make social work services more accessible to young mothers (Cheetham and Fuller, 1998). In addition, professionals working with young mothers must also reconsider their dual roles aimed at both controlling young mothers (through surveillance for example), and providing them with support and encouragement in regard to their 'mothering'. Consequently, this may require that social work professionals strongly consider the ways in which they can marry increased state pressures to police young mothers, whilst attempting to address how this may in fact contribute to feelings of stigma and its related consequences.

Young Mothers and Citizenship

One key finding of this research has demonstrated that becoming a young mother has presented some young women with the motivation to become 'responsible', and that this sense of 'responsibility' is strongly connected with being a mother. This has been an influencing factor in their roles as mothers and also in their development of a personal and political incentive to participate in community-based services and programmes, albeit in different ways and to varying degrees. In turn, the young mothers demonstrated their capacity to participate in society as active citizens in a

number of ways including: through their roles as mothers; through their involvement in paid employment; through their involvement in the education of both themselves and their children; and, through their participation in community based projects and participation in community based fora.

The young mothers also identified a number of barriers to community-based participation. This included:

- A lack of confidence in their ability to participate in community based endeavours;
- A feeling that their presence or ‘voice’ is not respected within community based politics;
- A desire to distance themselves from their community;
- A feeling of hopelessness about their community; and
- Being overtly excluded from social and political strategies.

Yet, perhaps the most difficult barrier to citizenship that was identified through the interviews with the young mothers was the prioritising of their ‘caring’ or ‘mothering’ responsibilities. This draws attention to a significant way in which mothering, and the personal and political activities associated with mothering, are not viewed as exemplifying acts of citizenship. This is particularly the case for young mothers because of their status as representing a ‘social problem’, which has resulted in a devaluing of their mothering duties more generally, and a further devaluing of their personal and political mothering activities.

I have argued that inherent in the social, moral, and political view of young motherhood as a social problem, is the assumption that young mothers will not or cannot contribute to society as active citizens. This happens in three different yet connected ways:

- Ignoring the various ways in which young mothers participate as active citizens through their unpaid work within the home;
- Failing to recognise that for many young mothers, achieving motherhood status provides them with a route to active citizenship. That is, becoming a mother has provided them with the desire to become increasingly involved in community based issues that are related to their experiences as young mothers; and,
- Ignoring the ways in which they contribute to their community through engaging in 'activist mothering'.

The first example reflects a liberal view of citizenship that not only undermines mothering work in a general sense, but also puts forth contradictory messages regarding the publicising of the private lives of young mothers. As such, state recognised citizenship duties and responsibilities fail to acknowledge the unpaid work that mothers engage in within the 'private' sphere. This issue has proven to be particularly complex when considering the lives of working class or poor young mothers. This is because, due to the surveillance of young mothers by the general public, politicians and social service professionals, the notion of the 'private' sphere is obsolete. Consequently, the mothering that young mothers do, actually takes place in the public sphere. This suggests that in viewing mothering as a private issue, the

domestic work engaged in by young mothers is further devalued through what is the so-called 'private' aspect of their public lives.

The second example highlights the state's failure to recognise how young motherhood can result in providing a route to active citizenship. This occurs through the omission of the act of mothering as an act of citizenship, in addition to the failure to recognise how the experience of being a mother can result in political participation. However, as the findings from this research have demonstrated, the social and emotional processes connected to becoming a young mother can result in community involvement or activism. This suggests that far from being experienced as a social problem, for some young women, motherhood can be experienced as something that provides them with self-esteem, confidence, and enthusiasm, as well as the motivation to become increasingly tuned into and concerned about local issues. This leads into the third way in which young mothers are excluded from experiencing substantive citizenship in that, the ways in which they have exemplified acts of citizenship, do not correspond with the social problem rhetoric connected to young motherhood. I have therefore argued that it is necessary to develop a broader view of active citizenship that can be viewed as existing along a continuum that includes both domestic and child care duties, in addition to community based involvement. Moreover, it must also account for the social, emotional and political barriers to citizenship that can be experienced at anytime and at anyplace along the continuum of active citizenship.

Finally, I have given considerable thought to the social work settings, practices and theories that will enable social workers to address the complexities reflected in young mothers' experiences of social exclusion and citizenship. This is particularly important in regard to the inadequacy of 'Third Way' policies within the UK to deal with structural problems encountered by young, white working-class and poor young mothers. In consideration of this issue, I believe it is necessary for social work in the UK to revisit its relationship with the voluntary sector and the potential for community based social workers in those settings to set the standard for socially inclusive social work practice and policy development. Through reflecting on this issue, one stage of this journey has brought to my attention the wealth of literature that is aimed at interrogating the relationship between New Labour's social exclusion policies and programmes and statutory social work practice (Butler and Drakeford, 2001, Jones, 2001). These accounts demonstrate both a sense of despair (Jones, 2001) and a call for radical measures (Butler and Drakeford, 2001). Yet neither provides concrete suggestions for how this can really be achieved. Perhaps, as Jones (2001) suggests, this is because of the pressure that state social work is under to reflect New Labour's views within practice. These arguments reinforce my belief that there is a need to increase the significance of voluntary sector based social work that is rooted within a model of community development. This raises important questions about why community based social work practices within the voluntary sector are marginalized within the greater domain of social work education, practice and theory, particularly in light of the demoralisation of social work under New Labour (Jones, 2001).

I have demonstrated both here and in the previous chapter, there are individual, collective, and political benefits to working with young mothers along a continuum of active citizenship that is grounded within a community development model for social work practice. At the same time, I have also presented arguments that have shown how community work has been marginalised within both social work education and practice (Payne, 1996, Taylor, Barr and West, 2000). This has highlighted the increasing need for social work educators to rethink the value of community-based social work. This is particularly relevant in view of the way in which the current social and political practices aimed at decreasing social exclusion fail to reflect the needs of certain marginalised groups in society. This has led me to put forth another area for further consideration, which is about questioning social work's commitment to local and national political and social change.

I strongly believe that social work can and should take part in developing community practices aimed at increasing the political literacy of marginalised groups of people. Yet, this will require that social workers play a key role in challenging social and political barriers to social inclusion and in advocating for a broader definition of citizenship. However, in order for social workers to contribute to the development of effective and inclusive social policies, programmes and services, they must also be able to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding, and contribution toward the social policies that directly affect their clients. As such, an important issue that will require further exploration is the question of whether or not social workers need to increase their own political literacy and if so, how this can be integrated into their learning in both the classroom and practice settings in order that social workers also

become 'active citizens' within the realm both practice and policy development. These are the kinds of questions that social work educators and practitioners who are committed to influencing political and social change, will need to seriously address as part of their commitment to maintaining an effective role in working toward decreasing social exclusion.

Inclusive Theory and Practice: Postmodern Feminist Social Work and Community Development

This study has drawn on postmodern and feminist theories in order to address the social and political complexities surrounding teenage pregnancy and young motherhood. Both feminist and postmodern theories have significantly influenced the way I have come to understand young mothers' experiences of social exclusion and the ways in which social work can contribute to developing practice and theory in this area. As such, I have argued that social work can address the issue of social exclusion of young mothers by working within a 'continuum of active citizenship' that is rooted within a postmodern feminist community development framework of social work practice. This does not mean, however, that I will no longer continue engaging in an ongoing process of self-reflection regarding what has been understood as the tenuous relationship between feminism and postmodernism (Ramazanoglu, 2001), and social work and postmodernism (Dominelli, 1997, Ife, 1999, Pease and Fook, 1999, Fawcett et al, 2000). Consequently, although I view the theoretical and practice based developments that have emerged from this research as further evidence of what postmodernism can offer to both feminism and social work, I also feel the need to continually challenge its role in working towards social change.

Although postmodernism offers social work new ways of understanding and addressing a multitude of issues faced by a variety of oppressed and marginalised groups, what it does not offer are universal solutions that many of those involved in social work feel the need to strive toward. This is perhaps why so many social work practitioners and academics have difficulty in engaging with postmodern perspectives on theory and practice. At the same time, social work practitioners and theorists have also presented debates about the ways that postmodern theoretical tools can be useful for social workers engaging in emancipatory movements.

Of particular interest to this research, is Leonard's (1997) view of postmodern critical politics as a reconstructed project of emancipation. Through an examination of the context of current welfare politics, he believes that postmodernism might offer an 'ethics' base that could guide the social work values of emancipation and through evaluating the new social movements that address the political forms of resistance that are favoured under postmodern conditions. Other ways of resolving this dilemma have been provided by Yeatman (1994), who suggests that postmodern emancipatory politics should not abandon the values of modern universalism and rationalism, but rather, enter into a deconstructive relationship with them. Hence, using postmodern tools does not necessarily mean giving up entirely on solution focused end results. By taking on some of the valuable propositions put forward by movements that are based in some form of essentialism such as Marxist, feminist and anti-racist movements, and reworking them within a postmodern framework, these

authors believe that postmodern politics can be a part of project that works toward emancipation and social change.

I have also considered feminist arguments which maintain that although postmodern feminists 'have celebrated the uniqueness of the individual and revealed the multiplicity of identities that each holds', and the 'fluidity of people's characters' (Dominelli, 1997:39), there continues to exist an 'uneasy relationship' between postmodernism and feminism. This is because, as Dominelli (1997) argues, postmodern perspectives have the ability to 'destroy solidaristic sentiments between peoples unless they are closely matched in terms of their multiple identities' (p.39). Consequently, one result of this could be a focus on 'identity politics' within feminism, which may hinder the formation of alliances between equally oppressed and marginalised groups of women (Dominelli, 1997). However, this argument overlooks two important issues. First, it underestimates a woman's ability to recognise that other women, who may have had very different experiences, can share her feelings of oppression whilst at the same time respect her need, at times, to remain primarily focused on her own personal and/or political issues. Additionally, viewing 'identity politics' as the main obstacle to the forming of alliances between oppressed groups, may also fail to address the barriers that exist within other feminist frameworks that strive toward feminist solidarity. These arguments are reflected in the young mothers' social exclusion and citizenship narratives that demonstrate the importance and value of creating spaces that were only accessible to young mothers, and that also showed their ability to empathise, and relate to, the struggles that were experienced by the older mothers who lived in their community. Moreover, the young mothers also demonstrated an ability to identify with the needs of the

community as a whole. This indicates that although the young mothers may have prioritised the need for services aimed specifically at the needs of young mothers, they would also support the development of services for other groups of people in the Greater Pilton community.

It is also important to recognise the numerous obstacles that young mothers encounter in regard to 'actively' participating in community based issues that directly affect them, never mind, the issues that affect other women in their community. This suggests that the expectation that some feminists have regarding the time it takes to be personally or politically aware and/or 'active', comes from a privileged position that has failed to acknowledge the barriers to working-class or poor women's/mothers' political participation. This is not surprising considering my earlier arguments about the failure of feminist citizenship theorists to address the 'paradox of caring' which exists for young mothers. In response to these arguments, Yuval-Davis (1997) has presented the notion of a 'transversal politics', whereby,

'Perceived unity and homogeneity are replaced by dialogues which give recognition to the specific positionings of those who participate in them as well as to the 'unfinished knowledge' that each such situated positioning can offer. Transversal politics, nevertheless, does not assume that the dialogue is boundary free, and that each conflict of interest is reconcilable...transversal politics differentiates between social identities and social values and...can exist across different positionings and identities' (p.131).

Hence, the notion of 'transversal politics' appears to resonate with a model of social work practice that works along the 'continuum of active citizenship' as it recognises the need to acknowledge the differences between individuals and the fluidity of their situated positionings, whilst at the same time, attempting to create a space for dialogue from which shared aims and objectives can be addressed.

Finally, I believe that postmodern feminist theoretical framework has provided me with the tools to interrogate and challenge social work's desire to work toward universal solutions that, at times, can hinder the process of achieving social change. In this sense, rather than ignoring the possibility of solution-focused endeavours, postmodern theoretical tools have provided me with a position from which to link theory to the practice of working toward social change. In turn, this could also enable the development of increasingly effective ways in which to challenge conventional social work methods of working with the socially excluded. Engaging in this research has also required that I constantly address aspects of my own personal and political beliefs and traditional ways of understanding the social world, in order that I do not engage with the postmodern tendency to 'condemn everything and propose nothing' (Briskman and Noble, 1999:58). I also believe that it is necessary to challenge the notion that social work has the power to emancipate anyone, and instead, suggest that if social work professionals truly believe that this is where we should focus our energy, then an operationalised definition of what it means to be 'emancipated' will need to be re-visioned. Moreover, because there appears to be an assumption that social change and emancipation are the same thing (Brown, 1994, Yeatman, 1994, Leonard, 1997, Pease and Fook, 1999, Fawcett et al, 2000), social work will also need to be clearer about whether or not working toward social change differs from the goal of emancipation. In my view, working toward the emancipation of oppressed and marginalised groups from a social work perspective can sometimes appear more like something that is being done *to* clients as opposed to *with* them. As a result, binary categories such as them/us, social

worker/client, and powerless/powerful are maintained by and within social work that may in fact be a demoralising act in and of itself.

Finally, through reflecting on this research, I have come to believe that a 'postmodern feminist framework' for social work practice has not only enabled me to support young mothers in a process of 'exposing' oppressive dualisms and discourses; it has also provided a platform from which to identify the various ways in which the young mothers in this study have resisted being categorised, and the creative and remarkable ways through which they asserted their power and agency. I also know that as their stories will continue to unfold and, that as their experiences as mothers shift and change, so to will their positioning on the continuum of active citizenship. For me, this suggests that the key to engaging in socially inclusive social work practice with young mothers is to support them, both individually and collectively, regardless of the social, emotional, or political position they may occupy on the continuum of active citizenship. This will also include recognising the potential within a young mother who has not yet found her place and the role that social work has to play in encouraging and supporting her in creating it.

Appendix One

Consent Form: Young Mothers, Social Exclusion and Active Citizenship Study

The aim of this study is to explore young women's experiences of their pregnancies and of being young mothers from their own point of view. The purpose of this is to examine the effectiveness of current government policies and social welfare programmes are meeting the needs of young mothers, and to provide a platform from which young mothers can share their views and opinions.

Some of the questions in the interview will be quite personal, as I will be inviting you to share your personal stories of pregnancy and young motherhood with me. I would therefore ask that you make sure that you have someone that you trust to talk to directly following the interview in case you feel the need to talk further about any of the issues that we discussed.

The interview will be taped so that I can transcribe the interviews, however all names will be changed to protect your identity. I would also like you to know that you can end the interview at any time you feel the need to do so.

If you have any question about the interview process, or if you have anything you would like to ask me or that you would like to add to your interview once it is over, please do not hesitate to contact me at 555-5555.

I _____ have agreed to take part in this study with the understanding that all information that I provide the researcher will be kept confidential. Any information concerning my experiences and that the researcher plans to use in the study will remain anonymous.

Appendix Two

Interview Schedule

A. Factual Information

- Age at discovery of first pregnancy
- Current age
- Age of child or children
- Employment and education status

B. What is like to be a mother?

Prompts:

- Was your pregnancy planned or unplanned?
- If it was planned, what influenced this decision?
- If it wasn't planned, what were the circumstances surrounding your pregnancy? Did you ever consider other options beside becoming a mother?
- What did you think it being a mother would be like?
- Had it been different or the same to how you imagined being a mother would be?
- How has your life changed?
- What is important to you about being a mother?
- What is/or your child/children like?
- Do you get a break from parenting?
- What bits about being a mother do you enjoy the most?
- What bits do you find the most difficult?
- If you didn't have a child/children right now, what do you think your life would be like?

C. Young mothers and social status

Prompts:

- Do you think young mothers have similar or different experiences to older mothers? In what ways are they similar or different?
- Do you think young mothers in Pilton have similar or different experiences to mothers in middle-class communities?
- What was your relationship with your family like before you became a mother?

- What was your relationship with your family like when you first had your baby up to now?
- Same questions with regard to the people in the community
- Have you any idea about how young motherhood is perceived by people outside this community?
- What do you think affects these perceptions?

D. Support

Prompts:

- Were you single or in a relationship at the time of your pregnancy/birth/now
- What impact has this had on your caring for your child/children?
- Do you live alone or with others (partner, family, friends)?
- Do you have contact with your parents or other family members?
- Do you have any contact with professionals?
- Do you have any contact with a community organization?
- Do you ever receive advice on how to mother? If so, who does this advice come from and in what manner?

E. Resources

Prompts:

- Do you use any community resources? If so, which ones?
- Why?
- What types of resources do you feel are useful to young mothers from this community?
- Do you think there are enough resources in this community aimed at meeting the needs of young mothers and mothers in general?

F. Active Citizenship

Prompts:

- What daily activities are you involved in?
- A Day In Your Life Chart
- Have you ever been involved in a process of making what you feel to have been an important decision, either for yourself, your child/children, or your community?
- Can you tell me about your involvement at Stepping Stones or the WPCC?
- What community issues are important to you, if any?
- If you have not been involved in community based activities, would you like to be? If yes, why? If not, why not?

G. The future

- If you had three wishes for your future, what would they be?

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- (a) This thesis has been composed by Saara Greene and,
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